

**ISLAMIC NATIONS AND  
KASHMIR PROBLEM**

**ATTAR CHAND**

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## Foreword

### KASHMIR-INDIA AND PAKISTAN

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Relations with Pakistan is not a push button process, much more has to be done to improve bilateral relations between India and its Western neighbour. My continuous meetings with Pakistan Prime Minister is not a barometer to measure relations. Setbacks have occurred in the efforts to better relations, but dialogue is an on-going process which should not be broken. The main question to tackle at this juncture is how to overcome these setbacks. Both the countries have the best opportunity to do this. I had raised the Kashmir issue with Mr. Sharif on September 3, 1992 at Jakarta, Indonesia. No progress is made on the Kashmir issue in my talks with Mr. Sharif. Nevertheless I believe that talks between prime ministers are by themselves desirable and that is where the matter stands.

P. V. Narasimha Rao,  
Prime Minister of India

New Delhi

## INTRODUCTION

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Violent confrontation and war have once again visited the Middle East in the latest Gulf crisis, resulting in the rape and pillage of Kuwait, major outlay of U.S. treasure and risk to American lives, and immense loss of Iraqi life. Middle Eastern politics remains among the most volatile in the world, suggesting that problems, remain plentiful and solutions elusive. The United States must radically reassess both the roots of conflict in the region and the outlines of the emerging new order. A new order will be necessary to break the cycle of local conflict and external intervention that continues to generate paranoia in the Middle East and to cripple most diplomatic initiatives. To secure a lasting peace, three challenges must be met: healing the regional paranoia, creating a new security order in the Gulf, and establishing the outlines of an Arab-Israeli peace. Paranoia, a deeply embeded psychological factor in the Middle East, vitiates American-inspired political initiative. This paranoia manifests itself as a mindset of helplessness on the part of regional populations, who feel themselves deprived of control over their own destinies, coerced by both external and internal forces. Imperialist intervention has come from abroad, while at home authoritarian regimes tend to be oppressive and harsh. How must an Iraqi feel today, having had no voice in government, after being ravaged by the ruthlessness and self-aggrandizement of Saddam Hussein, by the long war with Iran, and by the massed fire-power of Operation Desert Storm? Is such paranoia and anger without foundation?<sup>1</sup>

It has become fashionable in the Gulf war postmortem to belittle those observers who, during the Gulf war, expressed concerns about the deep-seated resentments in the region that exist toward external force - resentments that fortunately were sufficiently contained during the war to avoid compromising-- Operation Desert Storm. Yet these resentments are very

real throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds and may, in the months and years ahead, exact a political price from U.S. allies in the region. The United States is reading the wrong message if it believes that its military success validates the wisdom of military intervention as a regular option in Middle East policy for the future. Americans must take the twin legacies of foreign and domestic oppression of Middle Eastern peoples into consideration when formulating future policies. First, the United States needs not reduce the use of external force and intervention and thereby allow regional players to develop greater responsibility for their own security problems. Second, trends in the region toward democracy and increased popular determination of foreign and domestic policies must be encouraged. These are not merely abstract goals; they address the heart of a regional pathology that will have a major impact on the success or failure of U.S. security policy in the Middle East. If the citizen of the Middle East is in part the passive object of arbitrarily imposed external and internal forces, it is in the U.S. interest to alleviate these same roots of regional instability. In a stable, pluralistic society, Saddam Hussein could not have risen to power and would have been unable to work his perverse and barbarous will repeatedly upon his citizens and neighbours. Democracy in the region can no longer remain just an abstraction for U.S. policy. From the day the emir of Kuwait fled his country in August 1990, it was clear that there could be no return to the status quo ante for Kuwait. The emir could never go back to his old authority and privilege; indeed, a struggle over issues of political pluralism and democratic expression has already begun and threatens Kuwait with chaos. The specter of democracy is now stalking the entire Gulf. The demands began in Kuwait. Saudi Arabia, in turn, views the prospect, of greater participatory government in Kuwait - or Iraq - with trepidation and will likely seek to repress it. Other Gulf states face the same challenge. And democracy in Iraq would be even more destabilizing for the region because it would involve a literal social revolution: The enfranchisement of a down-trodden majority Shiite population could vault that religious group to the top of the Iraqi political order at the expense of the ruling Sunni Arab minority. Any Iraqi efforts to seek democracy will most likely bring long-term turmoil; the emergence of Shiite power there would strengthen Iranian influence. Does this require U.S. policy to turn its back on the quest for democracy in Iraq? Struggles for democracy will also prove destabilizing in the other Gulf states. In fact, democracy may not take root in the area in the near term at all, but the struggle for it will be profound. These events require a re-examination of the deeper goals conditioning American policy and interests in the region. The United States faced a fundamental philosophi-

cal choice: to focus on short-term stability or to support the growth of democratic values and practices in the Middle East, leading ultimately to a more durable stability. It will be difficult for democratic America - especially in this post-Cold War era - to Champion the virtues of authoritarian stability over those of pluralistic ferment and development. If the United States opts for stability over democracy, it will both profoundly compromise its deepest national values and delay the eventual reform of Middle Eastern society. Of course, a purely ideological compass cannot be the only guide in charting specific policies, and the situation in each country will have to be considered on its own merits in the broader context of other interests. But Washington must recognize the character of this democracy dilemma early on, for winning the war will entail solving complex problems in seeking the peace. If democracy is problematic to America's monarchical allies in the Gulf, providing security to regimes that ignore demands for internal reform will complicate the U.S. agenda even more. First, an American military presence in the area designed to protect local regimes will probably end up buttressing the royal family of one or another states. Irrespective of actual motives, the U.S. presence will be understood by the population of each Gulf state to represent an effort to keep the royal family in power, the better to use them as instruments of U.S. policy. Thus the American position becomes readily compromised - in ways reminiscent of the failure of U.S. policy towards the shah's Iran. Second, potential truculence among the winners of the Gulf war threatens to intensify the "haves vs. have-nots" struggle that emerged so powerfully during the Gulf war. The Saudis and the Kuwaitis both seem determined to punish the Jordanians, Palestinians, Sudanese, and Yemenis, as well as the North Africans, for their sympathetic or neutral positions toward Saddam Hussein during the crisis. Upwards of three-quarters of a million Yemenis may have been expelled from Saudi Arabia, heightening the prospects for conflict between those two states in the future - possibly even military conflict, given long-standing grievances and unresolved border disputes. A new order in the Middle East ultimately requires broader sharing of regional wealth and greater diversity of Arab populations in each state. If the slogans "Arab unity" and "Arab brotherhood" are to have any meaning at all the populations of Arab states must become far more open to diversity. The benefits of full social services and eventual citizenship must be bestowed upon all Arabs who partake in the building of these societies, including those who send remittances back home. Yet on political ground Kuwait has already determined that it will increase the importation of Asian workers, who will remain a passive and politically irrelevant

servant class in the country. Asian labour relieves the Muslim consciences of Gulf elites who would be uncomfortable employing fellow Muslims, much less fellow Arabs, as servants without rights. Kuwait seems to be off to a very bad start in establishing a new social order in the Gulf base on something more than a handful of clans clinging to huge oil holdings. Revanchist and exclusionist policies in the Gulf toward Palestinians, Jordanians, Yemenis, and North Africans are laying the foundation for a new radical "have-not" bloc that is awaiting a leader. The United States could thus easily find itself partners with the new "victors" of the Gulf who, instead of being chastened and enlightened by the cataclysm of war, turn inward, exact revenge from erstwhile enemies, and tighten the security environments for the ruling families. The causes of the next war may thus already be at work. Is it for this that America went to war? Simply backing the winners will not safeguard the peace. If the states and citizens of the Middle East want to end the pattern of frequent external intervention, they must play a larger role in establishing a more viable regional security regime. Security has historically been imposed by imperialist intervention from the British, French, and Russian empires, later augmented by unilateral American and Israeli action. Security has generally been defined in terms of the interests of the interventionary powers, which do not necessarily coincide with the interests of the states in the region. When regional states have sought to protect their own security, they have done so through adhoc coalitions directed against the threatening state of the day - Nasser's Egypt, Baathist Syria, Baathist Iraq in the 1970s, Islamic Iran, and, most recently, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The Cold War sent the United States on a forty-year quest for security that came to be defined primarily as retention of the status quo. The West also tried to create its own regional security organization, the Baghdad Pact (which became the Central Treaty Organization after Iraq's withdrawal in 1958), ostensibly operated in the name of regional security but really targeted against potential Soviet aggression. It proved helpless in the face of such internal upheaval as the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 and the Iranian monarchy 21 years later. Most Arab states viewed the Baghdad Pact as a direct instrument of Western neo-imperialism and control. The Arab League is the only comprehensive Arab collective security organisation that has been in existence since 1945. Operating as a kind of Arab United Nations, the League has enjoyed significant political success but limited military success. The ideology of pan-Arabism has hobbled the League by enabling progressive and radical Arab

states to define legitimacy in pan-Arab terms that favor only their own agendas. The endless quest for consensus also weakens the League. The League, nonetheless, did condemn Iraq's invasion of Kuwait by majority decision. It was not able to reach agreement, however, on joint Arab action to stop Saddam Hussein, mainly because of the early controversial involvement of American ground forces. It is interesting to speculate what the Arab League would have done - if anything - if Saudi Arabia had not requested American aid. If it is to succeed, a future regional security organization must place primary responsibility on the regional actors themselves. It must include all countries. It must not be conceived or directed against any single state: All members are potential aggressors and potential victims. Experience shows that if major states, such as Iraq or Iran, are excluded, the organization will simply become the target of their subversion. Iran as a member brings an additional advantage; a regional power that will dilute any tendency toward ideological pan-Arabism. Pakistan and Turkey would also expand the horizons of the organization. Israel, too, should eventually become a member, but realistically Israeli membership must wait for a solution to the Palestinian problem and the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations. Finally, the organization should have no "pillars" of special U.S. interest - roles played by Saudi Arabia and the shah of Iran for then President Richard Nixon; any "pillar" will be instantly perceived to be the tool of Western interests. If Washington avoids the kind of comprehensive collective security concept described here and opts instead for either purely bilateral security program arbitrarily based on the winners and purported "losers" of the last Gulf war, then the seeds of the next conflict will have been sown. The United States carries major political baggage in the Middle East that will compromise any regional security regime in which America is the primary actor. Any future security regime must allow the Middle Eastern states to hold the United States at a distance. The American role must be supportive, but largely over the horizon. If the regional organization requires special teeth, it can request them from the U.N., United States, or any other external power. Unless the Soviet Union regresses to its old ideological approach to world politics, it too should be able to play a useful role in the region, as will Europe. But a special Pax Americana will be very short-lived. Realistically speaking, such a new regional organization will probably not be able to solve all security problems as they emerge. Individual members will likely continue to seek special assistance from external powers, but they should exhaust internal mechanisms first.

European security, after all, did not develop overnight, and the U.N. is still learning new roles in a new global situation. The single most important new element for the region is the gradual move away from Western-dominated security approaches that are perceived as instruments of Western imperialism. The states of the Middle East will themselves profit from establishing a new, more rational security arrangement, breaking with the legacy of the imperial past. However, states in the region will require U.S. diplomatic aid to address one critical issue; the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>2</sup>

The changes initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev as the head of Soviet Union have resulted in truly far-reaching consequences across the globe - West Asia being no exception. The USA, which is today exerting influence in the world-affairs, much beyond its legitimate might, is in a hurry to settle the international disputes motivated by self-interests. The USA achieved a crucial advantage through enticing Saddam Hussein to usurp Kuwait, and then bribed and coerced the governments the world over for the use its armaments, and thus revive the mainstay of its economy. The news headlines of "Washington Post" July 18, 1990, are revealing in this regard.

"Unprecedented Military Budget Cuts"

"McDonnell Douglas to cut jobs"

"McDonnell Douglas Corporation, the nation largest defence colony, yesterday unveiled its plans for pulling the company out of its financial crisis.... It would eliminate 14,000 to 17,000 jobs.

After 'winning' the war against Iraq, US President George Bush announced in March that America would initiate moves to settle the Arab-Israel dispute, and strive to establish 'peace' in the region. Since then James Baker, US Secretary of State, has made six trips to West Asia and one to North American countries. Tunis, Morocco and Algeria, in this connection. The latest trip by Baker commenced from Moscow, where, after the US Soviet summit, it was jointly declared that a peace conference would be held in October to settle the Arab-Israel conflict; and, the invitations to the concerned parties would be sent just ten days prior to the scheduled conference.

Now Israel, the US protege, has declined to participate in the conference, if the Palestinians are represented by the PLO or the Palestinian representatives from the occupied Palestinian territories. As prominent Palestinian lead soldiers from the occupied territories, in their meeting with Baker, have outrightly rejected Israel's terms on the question of

Palestinians' representation. The proposed peace conference is likely to be a non-starter.

After Baker's latest visit, a high-level US delegation toured Israel and Jordan, and also met the same Palestinian delegation from occupied territories, which had met Baker. The Palestinian delegation submitted a memorandum containing the following points:

- ❑ The proposed conference should aim at the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories in accordance with the Security Council resolutions No. 242 and 334.
- ❑ The issue of liberation of Jerusalem should be deliberated in all the stages of the conference.
- ❑ The Palestinian delegation would represent both in the Palestinian residents of the occupied territories and the non-residents.<sup>3</sup>
- ❑ PLO should be accepted as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and the Palestinians should have the right to choose their representatives.
- ❑ The process of building resettlement colonies for migrant Jews in the occupied territories should be immediately stopped.
- ❑ The right to self-determination of the Palestinians should be accepted. During transition, Palestinian control over the occupied territory should be accepted.<sup>4</sup>

Jordanian Foreign Minister disclosed that the Jordanian delegation in its talks with the US delegation had demanded a written exposition of views from the US and guarantee, that Israel would vacate the occupied territories and accept Palestinian's right to self-determination in accordance with relevant Security Council resolution, besides the participation of Palestinians in the first round and prominent Palestinians from the occupied territories in the second round. A sizeable Palestinian population in Jordan seems to be the compelling factor for Jordan's adoption of progressive stand on the Palestinian issue. The popular Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, 'Intefada' which has entered 46th month, is also likely to influence the course of conference, if held. Lebanon - where civil war has raged savagely until the other day - is one country, which is most involved in the Palestinian issue. For long, it has been the scene of flexing muscles by various contending parties, including several Lebanese factions - like Druz, Amal, Islamic Jihad, Hizb-o-Illah, communists and Christian militia - different Palestinian factions and countries, like Israel and Syria. Some of the Palestinian and Lebanese groups used to resort to hijacking of civilian planes to invite the world attention towards their

plight, and gain some concessions from the touch and militarily superior, Israel. However, if of late the strategy of taking hostages, to bargain for some demands - usually, the release of captives - has been quite commonly resorted to by both, Lebanese Palestinians and Israel. Recently several rounds of talks have been held between the Israeli authorities and the UN Secretary General regarding the release of hostages, including seven police men, which Israel alleges, are in the custody of the Lebanese organizations. Whereas pro-Iranian, Islamic Jihad is demanding the release of around 370 people, including one of its leaders and Shia theologian, Sheikh Abdul Karim Obaid, in exchange for the release of remaining Western hostages. This conflict, concerns with Southern Lebanon and dates back to 1982, when Israel had attacked Lebanon, destroyed Palestinian bases - some of which were used for attack on Israel - and occupied the areas, which were contiguous with its northern boundary.

And it was from Southern Lebanon that Israel had arrested or abducted the Lebanese. To counter this offensive, the patriotic Lebanese forces, comprising such diverse groups as Druz, Amal, Hizb-ollah and Communists, had formed a "National Front for Independence of Southern Lebanon" which employing the strategy of suicide squads, ambushes and laying mines succeeded in forcing Israel to withdraw its forces unconditionally in February '85. But before leaving Southern Lebanon, Israel formed an eight to 16 kilometres broad belt, which it termed, 'security belt', and gave its control to pro- Israel "Southern Lebanese Army", which comprises 3000 men and is led by Gen. Antuan Lahad, who receives direct order from Israel's officers. The 370 odd Lebanese, whose release is being demanded, are being kept captive in an old fort 'Khayam' which falls in this 'security belt'. The US, which relishes its role as the international gendarme and has been shielding Israel since inception, has other reasons to take these diplomatic initiatives as well. For example, because of US presidential election in 1992 a lull in US diplomatic activities can be expected and the 'attempts' at 'peace' in West Asia can pay rich dividends to Bush in the presidential election. Also, the Israel's coalition government of Sharmir, may fall under US pressure, thus jeopardizing the peace moves. However, it is difficult to expect that the US would really force Israel to see reason and concede the genuine Palestinian demands. Syria, which has around 40,000 troops in Lebanon, has high stakes in the region. Syria regarded as a staunch ally of the Soviet Union till the other day has of late, started wooing the West. Syria is helping the Lebanese Government to disarm the mushrooming militants and end the civil war, thus bringing

Lebanon under Lebanese central government and united northern and southern Lebanon. But still, the Southern Lebanon is ruled by pro-Israel Lebanese militia. That is why the peace in the region depends on the Israel's withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, release of hostages from both sides, and the solution of Palestinian and Lebanese problems. Only after that, could the reconstruction of Lebanese economy, ravaged by 16 years of civil war, begin and the long awaited and highly cherished dream of the Palestinians' home be realised.<sup>5</sup>

In the USA there is euphoria about the US victory in the Gulf war, the defeat of Soviet weapons systems and the emergence of USA as the sole superpower. The US public feels reassured about its destiny and the Republican Party about its electoral prospects, but the non-whites do not see their future in the same light. Despite the steady advancement of Blacks and Hispanics, the totality of their aspirations remains far from fulfilment, and may prove to be the Achilles heel of the American giant. At the United Nations everyone speaks in hushed tones about American arrogance, Soviet subservience and the irrelevance of the General Assembly, where USA can call the tune and conduct "the Beggars' Opera". USA is confident of its ability to influence all States, excepting Israel, and it is an open question whether Israel's influence over USA is the stronger. The Security Council is functioning as an effective instrument of US foreign policy. No vetoes have been cast since USA took it over. The threat of the US veto ensures that only US initiatives succeed. US priorities at present are the aftermath of the Gulf war and the conference between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Until these two issues are resolved, it is unlikely that USA will clarify what President Bush meant by "the new world order" in his broadcast of January 16, 1991.

Although his idea is to make the UN "credible and effective in peace-keeping", neither he nor his spokesmen have said how, and their silence is not without significance. Other States have no thoughts to express on the role of the UN in the post-cold war world. The only issue in which lively interest is displayed at the UN is the succession to Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary General. None of the current aspirants is free of controversy, and it is quite possible that Perez may be asked to carry on for another year or two. Meanwhile, there is talk of creating four new posts of Deputy Secretary General in order to relieve the Supremo of routine matters and give him more time, but not power, to tackle problems that the Great Powers shy away from. Brisk lobbying has begun for filling the four new posts. Indian interest is predictable. The new game at the UN is guessing

what USA wants done, what pressures it will exert, and how it will respond to the concerns of other States. No State is expected to take a bold stand on any major question against USA. Together with other non-aligned States, India too has been marginalised by circumstances at the UN, and its present form is but a shadow of its former substance. Gone are the days when India took the lead in raising issues of international when India took the lead in raising issues of international import, such as racism, decolonisation and banning nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere. The Soviet Union has needlessly become a spent force at the UN. The cold war has ended on all fronts, but the arms race has not. Soviet military power is still second to that of USA. I cannot see the Red Army tamely surrendering its power or authority. There are political elements in the Soviet Union, Europe and elsewhere which would like it to act as a necessary balance to US power, and not join forces with it.<sup>6</sup>

As a new showdown with Iraq looms over the issue of nuclear disclosures, several nations led by President George Bush, have launched disarmament initiatives aimed at eliminating chemical and biological weapons from the region and stopping the expansion of nuclear capability and ballistic missiles even as the United States, Europe, the Soviet Union and China open the door to major new arms sales in the Persian Gulf, Syria, Egypt and Israel.

Even that axis of influence has shown cracks in recent months, with Egypt's miffed decision to pull most of its troops out of the Gulf in the face of questions about whether future protection of the region will be entrusted to the Arabs themselves or, again, to the West Gulf officials dumped earlier plans for a full-scale Egyptian-Syrian security force. The disturbing reality of the new West Asia is that no one is in a position to call the shots, Saudi Arabia, Washington's strongest Arab ally in the crisis, is facing a conservative religious backlash against a long-term Western presence in the region. "As often happens, we thought the Gulf war and so many surprising events that occurred would have a traumatic effect on West Asia, including the Arab-Israeli issue, and by now, a few months after the war, we are not surprised to discover that the more things change the more they stay the same," said Yossef Ben-Adharon, director of Sharmir's Shamir's office, shortly after Baker's initial, unsuccessful, visits. "These characteristics that are rooted in this part of the world don't change. They are flowing, like the sand in the desert, but at the same time they are rooted very deeply in the desert soil." The next phase in the post-war West Asia is bound to be crucial, for no nation in the region is satisfied with the status quo. It remains to be seen whether the changes that will come about will come through war or peace. The area is at a crossroads. It is ready to go in the direction of

stability, or in the direction of violence and upheavals, depending on the direction the international community takes.<sup>7</sup>

What is missing in the Arab World is the role played by the neutral and non-aligned countries in Europe, such as Austria and Sweden, which pressured NATO and the Warsaw Pact toward compromise. Other than Egypt and Turkey, no Middle Eastern states are prepared to accept a parallel role. Given the essential and supportive part played by Moscow during the Kuwait crisis, the time is right for the United States and the USSR to attempt similar roles in the Arab World. Peace in the Middle East is indivisible. All of the problems in the baskets overlap one another. Although no single problem is the sole cause of the rest, the Palestinian question and its derivative Arab-Israeli conflict do provide a point of intersection for more than one regional conflict. Not resolving this fundamental problem will continue to pose a serious threat to peace and order. At the same time, settling these core conflicts will not provide a panacea for all the region's ills. This should not suggest an insurmountable problem of circularity, because somewhere between ending these conflicts and mitigating other problems lies the hope for a less-explosive, less-authoritarian Arab World.<sup>8</sup>

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## THE FACE OF DESTINY

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Few times in history does the face of destiny pass over the landscape as it did that sultry August 2, 1991 night when a fuming rumbling line of Iraqi tanks hurtled across the moonlit desert and took up positions in a tiny seaside Sheikdom called Kuwait. By the time the sun rose, the magic kingdom of petroleum and parched sand, of flowing white robes and long, black limousines, of hidden harems and glittering office towers, was in many ways a memory, the first and bloodiest casualty of the Arab's petrodollar paradise, but not the last. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, in end, did more than shatter the illusion that the protected emirates of the Persian Gulf could live in comfortable isolation for ever, shielded from the poverty, turmoil and misery of their neighbours by the armour of their bank accounts. A year after the onset of a crisis in which well over 100,000 people died, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, is still in power; though his country is in ruins. Kuwait is a haunted land of oil fires and violent retribution that appears disinclined to democratic reforms. The window of opportunity for peace that it was hoped would open between Arabs and Israelis stayed shut for months until recent days Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise, fuelled by growing anti-Western sentiment from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and the explosive income gap between rich and poor Arabs is wider than ever before. In the months since the conclusion of the war, the region has veered uncertainly towards a new brink. On the one hand looms the possibility of a renewed US air strikes to counter Iraq's alleged refusal to fully disclose its remaining nuclear facilities on the other stands the hope of final resolution of the region's most intractable dispute, the Arab-Israeli conflict. More fighting or finally, after decades of turmoil the prospect of peace. Turning back the tide of years of enmity, Syria in the wake of the Gulf conflict has for the first time agreed to face-to-face talks with Israel: Jordan followed suit, the Gulf

states agreed to send an observer, the Palestine Liberation Organisation assented to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, Israel sounded some positive note and Moscow proposed a Mideast peace conference by year-end. But US Secretary of State James A. Baker III's latest initiative is by no means assured of smooth sailing. It remains uncertain what expectations were attached to Syria's endorsement and if they were in fact conditions what will Israel have to say about them? Israel continues to insist that it will not talk of the PLO or to any Palestinian representative from East Jerusalem, annexed by Israel in 1967. PLO chairman Yasser Arafat just as quickly insisted that such a ban would be a deal-killer but in the new post-Gulf war political order, how close was anyone listening of Arafat? An even bigger question is how far the United States will be willing to go to urge the parties into a settlement. The Arab Gulf states indicated that they were prepared to drop their nearly 25-year-old economic boycott of Israel in exchange for a halt to new Jewish settlements in the Israel-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. But Israel officials failed to embrace the offer, and attention focussed on the US Congress where Israel's request for 10 billion in loan guarantees to house new immigrants remains an open question.<sup>1</sup>

For almost half a century, peace in Middle East is dead. The whole West Asia is witnessing one bloodshed after another. The aggressive postures by the dictators have nullified the age-old dictum of "live and let live" in the war-ravaged regions. The Gulf War has aggravated the situation. Thousands were killed and countless injured. The devastation caused due to heavy bombardments is beyond calculation. Even months after the cessation of hostilities, the US President is persistently threatening Saddam Hussein of possible renewal of bombardments and of dire consequences. The US has become synonymous with the U.N. Both are like the two sides of the same coin. The destabilising forces are bent upon destroying peace and endangering the security of innocent lives in the region. The World looks on helplessly.<sup>2</sup>

Given the past record of Israeli intransigency, it may be somewhat premature to conclude that US Secretary of State James Baker has finally manoeuvred Israeli leadership to attend a peace conference on West Asia. However, he deserves full credit for stripping Israel of most of its alibis and creating such a 'level of compulsion' that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir now mentions the possibility of Arab-Israeli peace conference in the next few months. The Israelis have been asked to give their consent before the Moscow Summit next month, presumably to enable the US and

the Soviet Union to announce the convening of the peace conference. The Israelis are squeezing every drop of leverage they can get even to agree to attend the conference and so far they have succeeded. While maintaining they want to have peace negotiations with Arab countries without any preconditions, they stipulate that the Palestinian delegation should be part of the Jordanian team, should not have anyone associated with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and a resident of East Jerusalem, should not participate in the negotiations. They also start with the advantage of having the Syrian and Lebanese territories under occupation and the monarchs of Jordan and Saudi Arabia totally submissive to the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Egypt, the largest Arab country, having made its peace with Israel in 1979 Camp David Agreement under the patronage of President Carter, and having been the second largest beneficiary of US aid - next only to Israel - is not likely to lend even its diplomatic weight on the side of the Arab states.

The PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat by supporting Saddam Hussein during the Gulf war has forfeited the sympathy and support of all Arab neighbours and finds himself very much isolated. The peace settlement if there is one is bound to be an unequal one. If the Israelis can be pressured to hand over the West Bank minus East Jerusalem to a loose confederation with Jordan, give back most of the Syrian territory and vacate the self-proclaimed security zone in Lebanon that would be the best bargain the Arabs can hope to achieve under the present circumstances. People like Ariel Sharon would like to displace the Arabs from the West Bank into Jordan and create 'Greater Israel' to resettle the immigrant Soviet Jews. If at all one major conflict in the developing world could be described as a direct offshoot of the Cold War it is the Arab-Israeli one. Without the Soviet support Egypt and Syria could not have fought the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973. Now that the cold war is over the Arab nations are in no position to confront Israel and Saddam Hussein for his aggression of Kuwait. Yasser Arafat's support to Saddam Hussein compounded the Palestinian predicament. The US saw the end of the Gulf war with a stunning victory and the Arab States of West Asia totally under its influence as a unique opportunity to settle this long conflict on terms which Israel cannot reject. The Soviet union is not likely to raise any difficulties. Even the Chinese looking for most favoured nation treatment from the US and technological cooperation with Israel in defence industries are not likely to obstruct a US-sponsored solution. If the Camp David accord, the immediate treatment of Egypt and the subsequent reconciliation with the rest of the Arab and Islamic world are any pointers, the US, Israel and the Arab States now entering into these



negotiations perhaps expect they can ride such popular protest that may arise among the Muslim population over a period of time. Perhaps the anticipated increase in terrorism may bind the Islamic rulers with the US and Israeli security services more closely. Looking at it from a humanitarian angle it will be a great tragedy for the Palestinians and a grave injustice to them. But history is full of such injustices.<sup>4</sup>

The US objective of crowning the glory of its Gulf war victory with a West Asian peace took a big leap forward when President Gorbachev agreed at his Moscow meeting with President Bush to join the latter in convening a West Asia peace conference more or less on US terms. The proposed conference will obviously be convened on the lines finalised by US Secretary of State James Baker while commuting between West Asian capitals during the past month or two. James Baker has already persuaded the Israeli leaders to attend the conference on condition that though international in form, it will, in substance, mean direct Israeli Arab talks. With the UN and the European Community attending as little more than observers, the conference will make way for direct Israel-Arab talks after formal speeches and then meet only periodically to hear reports about progress at the substantive talks. The arrangement suits Israel since it meets Tel Aviv's consistent stand that it would have only bilateral talks with the Arabs. Baker has also agreed to give the Israelis a veto over the Palestinian representation. Since Bush left the question of the participants vague, it is not yet clear whether the Soviets have agreed to ignore the PLO's claim to being the sole representative of the Palestinians. That Baker will visit Israel again to get its response shows that Gorbachev might have suggested some way to reconcile the Israeli and PLO positions, but with the Israeli Prime Minister already under pressure from the extremists in his Likud party, he is unlikely to accept any compromise on the issue. With both Iraq and the PLO out, any West Asian peace conference will, in effect, mean nothing more than Syria's joining Egypt in recognising and dealing with Israel. A big gain for the Jewish state as also for Syria, which may regain the Golan heights and win acceptance for its control of Lebanon, but hardly anything besides. It is difficult to see how Jordan, with its large Palestinian population, can gain anything from the conference in view of the continuing Israeli rejection of UN Resolution No. 242 and the proposal to trade occupied Arab land for peace and recognition.<sup>5</sup> For the US and Israel, the situation in West Asia could never be better for peace. With Iraq still licking its wounds, the Palestinians being hounded out of Gulf states, the PLO reportedly divided within and the Soviet Union trying to reduce its global obligations, the situation is just right for buying peace cheap. The

problem, however, is that the Israelis are determined to talk and bargain tough and are, thus, likely to lose precious time in the parleys. And that is just what the PLO, Iraq and other tough Arabs need; for, tomorrow is another day.

The historic turn came in mid-July, 1991 when President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, in a letter of response to President George Bush's proposal for holding a regional peace conference, said that the US proposal was "positive and balanced and can constitute an acceptable base to reach a comprehensive solution and achieve peace in the region." He added that he was satisfied with the proposal because it was based on the principle of international law and a United Nations' role in the peace conference. A yes answer to the Bush proposal may soon be heard from Israel following US Secretary of State James Baker's fifth trip to the Middle East since the Gulf war. Israel, faced with a US desire for an affirmative reply to the proposal offering the Jewish state the first direct talks with its Arab foes, hinted it might accept pending clarification from the United States. Baker was sent to nail down Syria's acceptance of a US proposal for peace talks and convince Israel to go along with the plan. Bush proposed that a regional peace conference be convened under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union and that the conference be followed, immediately after its opening, by direct Israel-Palestine and Israel-Arab talks.<sup>6</sup> The issue of Palestinian representation, long an obstacle in the Middle East peace process, is a major problem thwarting Bush's previous peace initiative. However, it is expected to be resolved. Syria said it would support a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation of which the Palestinian members might be chosen from the occupied territories if they had relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Syria's response, described as an improved change in the efforts to push forward the Middle East peace process, threw the ball back into Israel's court. Israel called the change of Syria's position encouraging while insisting that the PLO be excluded from the peace efforts. Tel Aviv also stubbornly rejects the idea of land-for-peace. Baker and the leaders of Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have urged Israel to stop building Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab lands. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said, "I think and believe if Israel could suspend building settlements in the occupied territories, the Arab states would take reciprocal steps by suspending the boycott. These steps could bring us much more progress in the peace process." Baker echoed Mubarak, saying that if the steps were taken, "clearly a desire to improve the climate for negotiation between Israel and its Arab neighbours and the Palestinians would be evident." Israel has built more than 130 Jewish

settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, home to some 1.7 million Palestinians.<sup>7</sup>

Following Egypt, Saudi Arabia became the second Arab country to offer an end to the boycott against Israel. Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Sultan issued a statement saying that if Israel suspended the building of settlements. It would be possible for the Arab countries to take appropriate steps in suspending the Arab boycott of Israel as a contribution to encourage the ongoing efforts aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East. During the G-7 London summit, the seven industrialized countries called on Israel to stop construction of Jewish settlements on the occupied Arab land and, at the same time, appealed to the Arab countries to suspend their decades-old economic boycott against Israel. This was regarded as international pressure on Israel. During Bakers' recent trip to the Middle East, he won the support of major Arab states and expressed hope that the Jewish state would seize this historic opportunity for talks. After the Gulf war, Iraq, the head of the anti-Israel front, was seriously weakened economically and militarily. The Palestinian uprising lost support from Gulf countries because it sided with Iraq. The Likud wing in Israel, in spite of pressure from the international community, took advantage of the situation to continue to expand Jewish settlements. Now that Syria agreed to participate in a regional peace conference on the Middle East, a turning point has appeared in the peace process in the region. The conference, if convened, is expected to be held in Washington or Cairo. However, the "dual track negotiations" after the conference would be difficult and time-consuming. Its success would depend on Washington's determination to impose pressure on Israel.<sup>8</sup>

Secretary of State James Baker might prove to be an unmitigated disaster for peace in West Asia. He is undoubtedly an extremely skilled negotiator but in West Asia his skill and cleverness might lead to tragedy. He has during his latest visit succeeded in bringing Israel to the negotiating table. The obdurate and intransigent Yitzhak Shamir has finally agreed to talk. He had no alternative. Israel's dependence on American financial assistance places a certain limitation on his ability to manoeuvre and Hafiz Assad had in a masterly move announced his acceptance of the Baker plan during the G-7 meeting in London. Assad's sense of timing was impeccable but it is equally apparent that he had received some sort of assurance from Baker though the Secretary of State when he was in Damascus had said that he would not give any secret assurances. But as Foreign Minister Farouk Al Shara said "It is the first time that the United States speaks of a comprehensive settlement based on the UN Secretary Council Resolutions

242 and 338". If that is correct it means that the United States will have to persuade Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria. Till recently the American position had been that it is a matter for negotiations between the parties. On the other hand it seems that Baker had told Israel that Washington would honour the 1975 letter from the then President Ford to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin promising "great weight" to Israel's insistence that peace with Syria "must be predicated" on Israel retaining territory in the Golan Heights. However, there is no particular reason why Syria should negotiate a settlement if it fails to recover the Golan Heights. The basis for any agreement can only be land for peace. There is bound to be pressure on only land for peace. There is bound to be pressure on Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria. There is no emotional attachment to that piece of territory. Unlike the West Bank, Judea and Samaria to the Jews, the Golan is not part of Eretz Israel. Its importance is purely strategic and if by returning the Golan Israel believes that it will succeed in detaching Syria from the Arab intransigents it might well be tempted to do so. The real problem of course is the total refusal of Israel to make any concessions to the Palestinians and the PLO. It insists that the Palestinian delegation to any conference should not include any member of the Liberation Organisation or be a resident of Jerusalem. The United States has conciliated Israel by promising that it will not have to sit at the table with anyone it finds unacceptable. Israel thus has a veto on the composition of the Palestinian delegation and it will be in a position to delay the commencement of the negotiations as long as it likes.<sup>9</sup>

Till now it is the Arabs who have made all the concessions. They have agreed to direct negotiations and the lifting of the embargo. Israel has not made any concession and it has only with extreme reluctance agreed to participate. Its agreement is hedged with so many conditions that it hopes that the Arabs, and particularly the Palestinians, will find them unacceptable. In that case Israel will be able to blame the Arabs for the failure of the talks. For the moment, let us leave aside the question of Palestinian representation and consider the position of Jerusalem. East Jerusalem, part of the West bank occupied by Israel in 1967, has been annexed by it though the annexation has not been recognised. The suburbs of Jerusalem now just 30 miles into the West Bank and new settlements are coming up every week. For Israel there is nothing to negotiate about Jerusalem. As Shamir said in a speech in May "We told them (the Arabs) and we repeat and say it from here as well from the heart of Jerusalem: Israel's capital will never again be a divided city, a city with a wall in its centre, a city in which two flags fly. The city will in its entirety absorb immigrants, welcome pilgrims

and be the eternal capital of Israel". No way, say the Palestinians. To reconcile the irreconcilable is the problem which Baker faces. He has persuaded the Arabs and Jews to meet but there are no conjuror's tricks which will help him to solve the problem. And if an agreement fails to materialise, the situation is likely to deteriorate rapidly and peace will be further away than ever before. Israel will continue with the settlements, creating new facts and the West will blame the Arabs for the failure of the Baker mission.<sup>10</sup>

When secretary of state James Baker recently secured the acceptance of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to suspend their economic sanctions against Israel. If the latter freezes settlements in the occupied territories, it was nothing short of a major breakthrough. For, the Arab boycott of Israel has been one of the major stumbling blocs in the Middle East peace process. The Arab boycott is older than the State of Israel itself. While the formation of the Arab League in 1945 gave it a structure, its origin can be traced to 1908 when the Jaffa-based Arabic daily al-Asmai called for the boycott of the Jewish goods in Palestine. This was nearly a decade before the Balfour Declaration which promised a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The formation of a boycott committee in 1946 made it an organised affair. Initially the boycott was aimed at Preventing the formation of a Jewish State amidst the Arabs. Once this was unsuccessful, the League then attempted to economically strangle the infant state by imposing a series of sanctions. In the early days, all bilateral contacts, interactions and communications between the Arab states and Israel were cut off and the Suez Canal was declared out of bounds for Israel or Israel-bound shipping. But as times passed, the boycott entered a new phase popularly known as secondary and tertiary boycott. Thus, third parties were discouraged from engaging in any trade with Israel. Even though it began as an economic embargo against the immigrant Jewish people in the early days, it had taken serious political overtones and implications. Israel's exclusion from a number of regional and international organisations and bodies can directly be traced to the Arab boycott. For example, when in 1954 the five Asian powers - Burma, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) - were preparing for the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, the Arab League issued a statement reiterating its opposition to participate in any regional conference along with Israel. India which was very particular about the participation of communist China, thought it prudent to support others in excluding Israel. From then on Israel's non-participation in the Afro-Asian movements became routine. Not even the UN has been immune. Israel is not included in any of the regional groupings in the UN and thus is prevented from being elected to the Security Council. Bowing to the

Arab pressure, Israel has been denied membership to a number of regional UN organisations.<sup>11</sup> Sports has been another area of boycott. The Olympic movement itself has been politicised in this context. The absence of sports encounters between Israel and Arabs are understandable. In their desperation to placate the Arabs, some non-Arab countries refused or discouraged sports links with Israel. Israel's exclusion from the Asian Game since 1978 and its eventual non-inclusion in the Olympic Council of Asia formed during the New Delhi Asiad were the result of the Arab sanctions. The justification of the Arab boycott of Israel is highly debatable. Sanctions have been a political instrument for long and it is unlikely that nations will renounce this important instrument. There are numerous cases of economic boycotts and they are of shorter duration or for specific purposes. In the case of Arab boycott, the sanctions originated in the demand for the creation of Israel. In short, by enforcing the boycott the Arab reiterated their disapproval of very existence to Israel. How far has it been effective? It is difficult to estimate the actual financial losses suffered by Israel. But the fact remains that a number of prominent and major companies refused to deal with Israel, is an indication of its effectiveness. Automobiles and shipping are the two main areas where the boycott has been rather effective. Same applies to airliners, and Arabs, except Egypt, deny overflight rights to Israel-bound carriers. At the same time it should be noted that not all trade with Israel is boycotted or effectively banned. Hilton group, for instance, operates hotels both in Israel and Arab countries notwithstanding the boycott threat in 1961. Likewise, the military supplies are also excluded from its purview. President Saddam Hussein's adventure in Kuwait had radically changed the situation. While his much published "linkage" did not materialise the crisis and more particularly his missile attack against Israel and Saudi Arabia had brought them closer. When Mr Baker started his current phase of peace efforts in March this year, the suspension, if not abolition, of the boycott was very much on the cards. Even while adding new companies to their blacklist, the Arabs, especially Kuwait, has been giving sufficient hints to liberalise the sanctions Israel's policy of restraint during the Gulf war also was partially responsible for this new situation. After 40 years only Egypt has formally abolished boycott measures. Yet, its trade links with Israel are minimal or negligible. So when the Saudis agreed to suspend their economic warfare against Israel, it is nothing less than a dramatic and most positive development in the Arab-Israel conflict. This suspension being conditional do not affect it is implications. Till now it was never on the agenda. The Arab condition is of course, the suspension of settlements. This demand is not an infringement upon Israel's sovereignty. While the rightlists in Israel claim West Bank and Gaza for ideological reasons, they do not support annexation. Hence,

legally they are not a part of Israel and are disputed territories whose final status is to be determined through negotiations. Therefore, by not building any new settlements or suspending the settlement activities, Israel loses nothing. On the other hand, the economic and political implications of the Arab move will be far reaching. A number of countries who are afraid of normalising relations with Israel will surely be emboldened.<sup>12</sup>

The chief obstacle to opening peace talks in the Middle East is not the make-up of the Palestinian delegation. It is the expanding Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank. After all, what is there to negotiate about if the Israelis just continue to take our land? How can we be expected to talk while they build? Israel's actions are very discouraging if we are to believe they are sincere about peace. This was the message I left in Washington last week when I met during an unofficial visit with US Secretary of State James Baker, US National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and White House Chief of Staff John Sununu. I thanked them for their efforts, but told them it will be very difficult for any peace process to start while Israeli bulldozers were busy constructing new settlements and enlarging existing ones. I told them that the Arab side expected to be present at the peace talks, whether from the Gulf region, the Middle East or North Africa, will agree on this point. I found that the Administration understands the situation more thoroughly. I believe the Administration remains determined in its efforts to pursue the peace process and arrange a dialogue. As far as I am concerned, things are going in the right direction. However, a key question is the make-up of the Palestinian delegation. This is a matter for only the Palestinians to decide. In order for that delegation to have credibility in the eyes of all Palestinians, the decision must be made by the Palestine Liberation Organisation leadership in Tunis. Otherwise, there cannot be meaningful negotiations. The PLO leadership has been widely criticised for supporting Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War. But if the link between the Gulf War and Palestinian Self-determination could not be made then, why make it now? There is no link between that war and the right of Palestinians to choose their own representatives. The dispute between the Palestinians and Israelis can only be resolved through direct negotiations. That is why we Palestinians fully endorse the speech delivered by President George Bush to the US Congress on March 6 calling for such negotiations. And that is why we greatly appreciate the efforts of Secretary Baker in trying to bring all the parties, including Syria, to the conference table. But the main conflict is between the Palestinians and the Israelis. To make any progress in resolving the core issues of this conflict, our delegation must have the credibility that can only be granted from Tunis.<sup>13</sup>

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has told the US that it is unacceptable for any member of the Palestinian delegation to come from East Jerusalem. While it is up to the Palestinians, not the Israelis, to decide where their delegation comes from, my position is that East Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nebulus, Hebron and Gaza are all occupied territories, and so a Palestinian delegation will be authorised to speak about all parts of the occupied lands - including East Jerusalem. To me, East Jerusalem is part and parcel of the occupied West Bank and thus must be a part of any negotiation based on United Nations Security Council resolution 242, which clearly spells out a territory-for-peace formula tied to the legitimacy of internationally recognised borders. Judging by his March 6, 1991 speech, President Bush sees this exactly as I do. The Israelis say Jerusalem is their capital. But there is not a single foreign embassy in Jerusalem. They are all located in Tel Aviv or elsewhere in Israel. This indicates that not only Palestinians, but the whole World, does not recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. A key issue that must be taken up at the conference table is whether a Palestinian delegation would accept some form of interim limited self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza instead of immediate full statehood. The official position of the Palestinians would be presented then. However, during various meetings in Jerusalem with Secretary Baker since March, he indicated that, in the first stage of the proposed peace process, Palestinians would get more than autonomy and less than an independent sovereign state. Then, after three years, meaningful negotiations would begin between the Palestinians and Israel to arrive at a comprehensive solution. I accept this formula. The PLO leadership in Tunis must now find intelligent, bright people to represent the Palestinians. The focus should be on those who have the knowledge and experience to carry out the unique art of negotiation. I personally prefer a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation because it is in the best strategic interests of the Palestinian people. The nature of Jordan's dispute with Israel is more or less the same as ours. In the end, as I have been saying since 1974, the only hope for any of us is to ultimately form a Benelux system comprising Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel. Only when we are tied together in a common market where everybody cooperates in business, trade, finance and service can fears about secure borders disappear. The French and Germans fought each other for more than 200 years. Now they are the closest partners in Europe. Are we so horribly different? Israel must now show that its professions of peace are sincere. The Arabs, led by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, have boldly offered to end the Arab boycott of Israel if there is a cessation of new settlements. Yet, Israel has thus far failed to offer a peace gesture in return such as a courageous and magnanimous offer to stop all settlements. Israel must recognise that, for us all, peace is

the only road to survival. If Israel continues to rely on military power, the corrosive tension in the Middle East will continue. There will never be a military solution to the Arab- Israeli dispute. The Israelis must realise that they are destined to live with the Palestinian people in the holy land for ever.<sup>14</sup>

While the release of some Western hostages in Lebanon lease of the rest have been in focus, events are gradually moving towards the proposed West Asia peace conference. There are compulsions on many sides to hold the conference and the active American involvement in the process is proof of the fact that its credibility is on the line. In a sense, the Gulf War and the victory of US-led forces carried with them the moral obligation to address the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. President Saddam Hussein made a vain effort to justify his invasion and annexation of Kuwait by linking his indefensible act with Israeli withdrawal from occupied land. But for the Arabs and much of the developing world, the United States can redeem its honour only by succeeding in getting Israel to accept the relevant United Nations resolutions. Prospects for a new beginning in West Asia are more propitious than they have been for a long time because the end of the Cold War has meant that the major Arab countries must evolve their future strategies without the countervailing power of the Soviet Union. The most dramatic change this has brought about is in the Syrian position in accepting the American peace proposals while using Washington's benevolence to consolidate its position in Lebanon. The Americans were careful in bringing the Soviets on board for the peace conference during the two powers' summit meeting the two power's summit meeting in Moscow. The resumption of full diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel is on the cards, once the dates for the October conference have been agreed upon. Israelis have an over-seeing role without restoring diplomatic relations. That said, some of the hurdles to convening the peace conference have still to be crossed. This cannot but be so, given the complexities of Arab politics, the deeper divisions in the Arab World caused by the Gulf war and the US strategic and military relationship with Israel. Besides, it is even open to question whether all the Arab states want to see the emergence of an independent Palestinian state. The two main hitches are the nature of the Palestinian representation and the defiant Israeli attitude in continuing to build Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank. Israel objects to the direct participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and representation of Arabs from East Jerusalem, which it has annexed.<sup>15</sup>

Some of these ambiguities remain to be cleared while others will be deliberately left undisturbed to get all the parties to the conference table. The issue of Palestinian representation, for instance, will need to be fudged, with the PLO approving a list without officially being participants.

The agreed frame-work will, of course, be a joint Jordanian-Palestinian team. The original concept of a United Nations-sponsored conference has already been considerably diluted, in view of Israeli objections. But it is still not clear what kind of a referral role the conference will have. As far as the Israelis are concerned, the conference is a face-saving formula for the Arabs before they can get down to face talks with individual Arab countries and the Palestinians. However, the conference is likely to be given the authority to reconvene after a time to assess the results. The peace conference, as and when it is convened, will at best be the beginning of a long process. But its very convening will help defuse the Arab-Israeli confrontation upto a point. For instance, the Israelis will willy nilly have to halt building new settlements on occupied land, short of their shooting the conference and the peace process out of existence. For a start, the Israelis are not even officially accepting the underlying concept of territory for peace and are giving their own unacceptable interpretations to the UN resolutions. What the Israelis have in mind is an autonomy package for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with a time frame before further negotiations can be held with the Palestinians. Again, for the Israelis. East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights are non-negotiable.

As the talks progress, and once the conference is convened these opening gambits will have to be tempered. It is, for instance, clear that Syria cannot accept any arrangement which leaves the Golan Heights with Israel. In all likelihood, Israel will have to surrender the Heights, with cast-iron guarantees of its demilitarisation. The East Jerusalem problem is more complex, striking as it does the religious chord on both sides and the fact that Israel has integrated it with West Jerusalem. Some special status for Jerusalem will have to be evolved. As far as the West Bank and the Gaza strip are concerned, the time frame for moving from autonomy to independence, with demilitarisation and possible confederation with Jordan, will have to be credible. The hardline Israelis are, of course, totally opposed to the peace conference idea because they believe, with some justification, that once the process starts, it can have only one end: the giving up of almost all, if not all, occupied territory. And they have convinced themselves that the interests of the Jewish state, living in a hostile neighbourhood, demands the retention of all occupied land.<sup>16</sup>

By the same token, it is the hope of the United States and many others that once the process of individual talks between the Israeli on the one hand and the Arabs and Palestinians on the other gets started, the sham edges of each side's proposals will begin to be rounded. There is, besides, an element of desperation on the part of the Palestinians because the longer the process takes, the stronger it will be the continuing to change the

situation on the ground. In essence, the United States is seeking to conduct an orchestra where individual musicians are playing discordant tunes. The central issue of the Arab-Israeli confrontation is overlaid with the inter-Arab rivalries, the trauma of the Gulf war, the lack of enthusiasm of some Arab states for an independent Palestine and the overriding American strategic interests. The United States is still trying to cobble together a security arrangement for the Gulf states whose precise contours remain to be defined. An American commitment to the security of these states is not in doubt but it has to determine how the presence of its ground troops will jell with Arab and Iranian susceptibilities. Despite the recent agreement among Egypt, Syria and the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab component in the security system is likely to be merely the icing on the cake. Partly, the future scenario will be determined by the shape of things in Iraq. Washington is waiting for the fall of Saddam even as it continues to defand Iraq under United Nations auspices. While thus far defying all predictions about his impending fall, Saddam has brought misery to his country and helped Washington to emasculate his country's sovereignty. Egypt and Syria have their own regional ambitions as they adjust to a new world in which Iraq is out of the running as a major player for some time and the Soviet Union has opted out of playing an interventionist role. Besides, the question of integrating Iran in the West Asian equation remains an open question. How far the United States succeeds in its endeavours to begin to end the Israeli-Arab confrontation remains to be seen, but the end of the Gulf War and the increased clout it has provided an opportunity that comes rarely. West Asian shuttle diplomacy has untill recently been associated with Henry Kissinger, but if James Baker succeeds in his shuttle diplomacy, he would score over the high profile Kissinger and make West Asia a less dangerous place than it is.<sup>17</sup>

King Hussein of Jordan, in an interview published on September 13, 1991 urged Arabs and Jews to abandon what he called past barriers and taboos in the search for peace in West Asia.

His comments appear three days before US Secretary of State James Baker leaves for Israel (September 16, 1991) on a further round of consultations on a possible West Asia peace conference.

Baker is also due to visit Egypt Jordan and Syria before returning to Washington. In the interview, given in London to the London newspaper. The Jewish Chronicle. King Hussein said he fears that if the present US-brokered peace process fails. West Asia is sliding toward the precipice.

"We would be playing into the hands of the extremists," he was quoted as saying.

The West Asian Peace Conference to be held soon, is by far the most serious of the attempts mounted at finding a solution to the highly emotional Palestine problem. The three previous attempts, preceded by much ground movement and hope, were overtaken by events that had much to do with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), albeit indirectly. Following Yasser Arafat's historic "gun and olive branch" speech at the UN General Assembly in 1974 there was much preparation for 'Geneva'. Just as there was in 1977-78, after the US-Soviet joint declaration and a suggestion to include the Palestinians in an enlarged 'Camp David' agreement. The last significant move was in 1981 following the 'Venice Declaration' of the EEC. They all came to nought. And now, in the post-Gulf War, and one super-power era, considerable optimism is expressed about the chances this time round. Obviously in the misconceived assumption that all which stood in the way of peace has been pushed aside. Since November 1990, Syria has had its way over Lebanon. First with the bloody putsch against the renegade Michel Aoun at Ba'abda, the presidential palace, then taming of the various militias, and finally with the drive against PLO's heavy arms - only. That was the price it extracted for sending troops to Saudi Arabia and backing the US position on Kuwait. Considerably satisfied by the new ground reality in Lebanon, Syria gave its nod to attending a peace conference. But the wily Hafez alAssad did it in his own inimitable style, appearing to look cautious, thoughtful, compromising, but yet seeming to be firmly with the 'Arab cause' - whatever that has come to mean today. That put the onus on Israel, and it really caught Shamir's Government by surprise. No longer could they get away by claiming that the 'Arabs don't want peace, hence they will not talk to us'. The uni-linear Yitzhak Shamir hedged and fudged the issues, but the Americans would not give up. Israel did not want anything more than an observer role for the UN, that was agreed to; they did not want any suggestion of land for peace', that was also granted. Shamir's insistence that Palestinians be part of a joint delegation with Jordan, and that Israel reserves the right to veto any member has not, as yet, met with any success. A compromise on these issues, as fundamental to the Palestinians as they would be to any people, will cost the proposed conference its legitimacy.<sup>18</sup>

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## ARABS, KASHMIR LINAGE AND INDIA

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India's response to the Gulf war should take into account communal passions, which are running very high. Hence, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's firm refusal to link Iraq-Kuwait and Israel-Palestine is irresponsible while the opportunistic anti-US protest outside Delhi's Jama Masjid by V.P. Singh's Janata Dal faction is clever politics. These are not reasoned positions based on the nation's enlightened self-interest. Such self-serving recommendations are part of the turf building and protection rackets that has passed for policy making in the four decades of priviledgentsia raj. Saddam Hussein himself has said Iraq's march into Kuwait was about oil prices and Kuwait's refusal to curtail production. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip began to feature on Iraq's strategy only after the initial devastation wrought by the multinational forces. Whatever happens in the US-Iraq faceoff, the war in the Persian Gulf holds a lesson for India: National power, the ability to intervene and shape events in the country and around the world, is a cold reality that combines economic strength, social equity and morality. The day an Indian commitment to redress a wrong in the region can have third nations scurrying for shelter, the day militancy backs down before a determined national leadership, the day middlemen are marginalised by upfront business practices, the day workers are motivated to put in an honest effort, the day disadvantaged citizens can look to the government to prosecute their case that will be an exercise in real power. But we have never come to terms with the cold centrality of power: that it is more than moral posturing. The forums of public debate are chocabloc with weighty issues: secularism, equity, non-alignment, democracy - the four pillars of Indian political thought. Yet nowhere is the acknowledgement that these are so more than postures



when the system does not have the power to make them stick. It is as though we are afraid of power. When we talk about a power base, we usually refer to the number of peasants, labourers and hoodlums politicians can coax into a rally. That kind of power has to do with being artful. A system based on such a definition of power is inherently parasitic. It cannot command legitimacy, though it may enjoy short-term influence. Today India's bluff has been called. And no amount of holier-than-thou exhortations to preserve the unity and integrity of the country or communal harmony or world peace will get us a hearing either within the country or outside. It is time to review options.<sup>1</sup>

With the 46-member Organisation of Islamic Conference split vertically and horizontally over the Gulf war, Islamabad sees in this situation a good opportunity to rally the OIC around issues where it could unite. Ostensibly the immediate purpose of trying to convene an Islamic Foreign Ministers' meeting in Islamabad is a peace formula for the ongoing crisis. Iraq has already rejected any Pakistani mediation but that might not stop Mr. Nawaz Sharif from pursuing his efforts whose real purpose is to seek endorsement of a linkage between implementation of U.N. resolutions on Kuwait, Palestine and Kashmir. An oblique purpose of the suggested meeting is to enable an Islamic force to inject itself into the Gulf. One of the first objectives of Pakistan's six point proposal is the withdrawal of Allied forces from the Gulf. Iraq has turned a deaf ear on Kuwait. The West and the Gulf regimes, Syria and Egypt have rejected the linkage with Palestine. Despite this, Islamabad continues to press the issue in the hope that the OIC will find at least one issue. Kashmir, around which it could rally its membership. The Pakistani Prime Minister is trying to fix a tour of the Magreb Arab North African countries to seek endorsement after an earlier trip to Iran, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia. In good measure Pakistan's success in the OIC so far on Kashmir has been the result of Saudi Arabia's clout. Though one cannot say this with certainty. Mr. Nawaz Sharif may not be able to draw the same amount of Saudi Commitment as before. For one thing the Saudis are very unlikely to agree to any special OIC meeting at this stage for obvious reasons that such a meeting would blow a hole in the coalition claim that most Islamic nations are ranged against Baghdad. The unrelenting bombing of Iraq and the public outcry will make it difficult even for borderline cases to support the U.N. resolutions on Kuwait without a parallel expression against the destruction of Iraq. Moreover, the Saudis might suspect that Islamabad could be fronting for an Iranian effort to take a claim for an OIC role in the Gulf arena. In short, at this time Saudi Arabia would rather use its dominant role in the

relatively united Gulf Cooperation Council to express its views. Similarly Egypt is clearly inclined towards an Arab role not an OIC injection in the post-war Gulf security set up. The other side of the coin is that in order to re-establish its clout in the OIC the Saudis might champion the Pakistan's case on Kashmir, primarily because all that would need to be done is to reiterate the August 1990 Cairo OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting that was in content fully anti-Indian. On the whole, this seems unlikely because one of the instruments of the exercise of Saudi influence is money.<sup>2</sup>

It is a whole new ball game after the last OIC meeting. The Saudi purse is not going to be that open. On the one hand there is the uncertainty about oil prices in the post-war immediacy when vast accumulated reserves come into the market and there might be a slump in revenues. The Saudis have also to bear a large burden of the post-war redress of grievances that the oil wealth is not being shared with poorer Arab nations. Among the more primary concerns will be defence expenditure, anybody expecting Western forces to leave early is being optimistic. The Saudis will have to meet the bulk of the tab of a security arrangement which will eventually be founded on a larger Western air and naval presence, modern weapons systems and a substantial Arab, if not Islamic, presence. So much for the regional picture. In the bilateral arena Pakistan may be a trifle over-optimistic in expecting unconditional Saudi commitment. One facet of Saudi policy that has become very evident over the past few months is its assertiveness with countries it has been benevolent to. Pakistan does not fall in the category of Jordan, Yemen, Sudan and the PLO but the Saudi-Pake equation has not been without friction. There have been plenty of complications after Riyadh asked and expected forces from Islamabad, on call. Referring to Islamabad's dithering, Pakistan's commentator, Mr. Mushahid Hussain writes in the Middle East International (January 11). The Saudis have also privately conveyed to Pakistan their anger at what they see as a lack of enthusiastic support in their hour of need". Pakistan preferred to do its own study of Saudi needs rather than agreeing to a request. Later the Saudis refused to agree to a Pakistani condition to send only men without equipment and weaponry. Subsequently when the Saudis asked for an armoured brigade "again the Saudis refused to provide equipment and as a result Pakistan turned down the request thereby increasing Saudi anger," says the columnist. It is now well recognised that except for Pakistani troops already based in some Gulf countries there are no troops from Islamabad in the coalition. The inclusion of 28 nations in the coalition is not correct. There is little doubt that these wrangles stem from internal



squabbles within Pakistan. They enhance Saudi apprehensions about Pakistan's commitment. These problems need to be placed in the context of three facts. One, that the Pak-Saudi relationship was founded on military cooperation. Two, in the Gen. Zia-ul-Haq period an added Islamic dimension was imparted to the partnership. Three, the polite ejection of a Pakistani division from the Saudi Kingdom during the eight year Iran-Iraq war when Pakistani division from the Saudi Kingdom during the eight year Iran-Iraq war when Pakistani generals could not acced to a Saudi requirement to withdraw Shia troops. Pakistan did not want its professional Army polarised along ethnic lines. The long and short of the present situation, - with mass demonstrations and Gen. Mirza Afzal Beg's views - is that it has exposed the fragility of a relationship that is largely influenced by military cooperation in a highly charged religious environment at a time of Saudi need. Because Pakistan's primary intention to mobilise the OIC on the Kashmir issue, it is likely to continue pressing even after the need for Iraq withdrawal from Kuwait has eliminated itself from the six point proposal. That would leave the residual linkage between Palestine and Kashmir. It is a matter of judgment for India how to respond to this clever but transparent pol po ploy. Either India counters it with its own diplomacy which in the pre-Iraqi invasion stage was not fruitful or, just ignore the issue. New Delhi will need to be on guard about the apparently devious intent of the bait.<sup>3</sup>

India was right in opposing Iraq's occupations of Kuwait, but it was wrong in condoning American action in arrogating to itself the right to intervene and decide international disputes by using its military might. No nation should be allowed to take the international law into its own hands and act as policeman of the world. This right should belong to the UN. Even after becoming a member of the Security Council on January 1, 1991, India remained almost completely inactive till the war broke out on January 17. It did not take any initiative to requisition a meeting of the Council to propose that implementation of its November 26, 1990. resolution, authorising it "to use all available means to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait", be entrusted to it (the Council). India did not demand at any stage that if military action became unavoidable, it should be taken under the UN command and its military committee. Saddam Hussein's response to the moral force of the SAARC, NAM or UN, was likely to have been less negative. However, irrespective of the degree of response of such moves, they would have made it difficult for the Iraqi leader to link the issue of Kuwait with Palestine and to mobilise religious, racial and emotional support in his favour. As the war prolonged and groundswell of sympathy for Iraq became more pronounced, India did start hectic peace moves. It is

certainly good go associate with the peace sentiments of the humanity. But such moves have a limited value till they are translated into a concrete formule and an effective diplomatic strategy. It would not be easy to provide a face-saving to Iraq for withdrawal from Kuwait or to persuade the coalition forces led by America to leave the Gulf without liberating Kuwait. While the efforts to find a via media may continue, world opinions should also be mobilised now for dealing with the situation after the Allies achieve their declared objective. Any attempt to use the present war to humiliate Saddam Hussein and Iraq may have disastrous consequences for the Arab world as followed humiliation of Germany after the first World War. It might lead to a polarisation between tendencies towards American hegemony and Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>4</sup>

For the simple fact is that whether it was an afterthought on the part of Saddam Hussein or not, there is a nexus between Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and Israel's withdrawal from the territories it illegally and arrogantly occupies. India cannot escape that fact. Indeed there are many injustices that have been perpetrated in the past that cry for justice being rendered, including the re-unification of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir with the Indian motherland. There are some other points that Kissinger advocated which call for consideration. Among the measures Kissinger suggested is 'an terms arms control policy for the Gulf to prevent a recurrence of the weapons race that contributed to this conflict.' But why restrict the arms control policy only to the Gulf countries? Why not extend it to Pakistan as well? Again, Kissinger suggests 'an international programme for imposing tough sanctions against terrorism.' Why not make a beginning, even now, with Pakistan which has been giving aid and comfort to Sikh terrorists and the Kashmir militants on Pakistani soil? What prevents the US from staying Pakistan's attempts to stick a knife in its neighbour's back? The fact remains that the US, as Regis Debray pointed out, has been 'mocking the United Nations for 20 years' refusing to subscribe to international law. The US has been behaving as though it were a law unto itself. What is approved of is right; what, in its national interests it sees as 'wrong' it condemns outright. This is an inadmissible state of affairs which has long gone uncondemned precisely because the voice of the weak has never been heard loud and clear. Every time India has tried to speak out for developing countries and their woes, it has been beaten back. It may come as a surprise to many to know that when the leader of the Indian delegation to the UNCTAD conference in Geneva proved too hard a nut to crack, the US State Department instructed the US Ambassador in Delhi to call on India's then commerce minister to ask him to recall India's delegation leader. That India did not then oblige is a different matter. What a Chandra Shekhar,

faced with a similar demand would have done is another matter. Threatened with a refusal of an IMF loan, the Chandra Shekhar government meekly and tamely went along with the US-sponsored resolutions in the Security Council, going to the unacceptable extent of saying that there cannot be any linkage between the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And when threatened with the withdrawal of Saudi oil supplies if India was not more cooperative, India again meekly agreed to providing US warplanes and warships with refuelling facilities at Indian airports and seaports. That is the extent of independence shown by the shaky Chandra Shekhar government. One almost pines for the days of Jawaharlal Nehru and V.K. Krishna Menon when, whatever else their other shortcomings, they dared to stand up to the West.<sup>5</sup>

The U.S. rejects Pakistan's linkage of the Gulf crisis with the Kashmir issue, U.S. President George Bush Administration officials said in Washington, on February 10, 1991.

A Bush Administration official told Asian News International, "We are not interested in any kind of linkage" of the present Gulf crisis to any other situation, much less the linkage of Pakistan's dispute over Kashmir with India to the Iraq-Kuwait situation. The two did not have any parallel.

Reports described one of the six points in a Gulf peace plan suggested by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as relating to the Kashmir and Palestinian situations. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's peace plan, according to reports, seeks that the world community must address the issue of liberation of Kashmir and Palestine as part of a comprehensive peace effort.

The White House confirmed on February 4, 1991 that President George Bush spoke with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as part of Bush's communication with many heads of Government on the Gulf situation. But Bush Administration officials said that Washington had not been informed of the six-point plan proposed by Nawaz Sharif, U.S. officials underline that Washington's policy on the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan "is well known" and the U.S. stands firm on the 1972 Simla Agreement as the underlying instrument to serve as a resolution of dispute between the South Asian neighbours.

Asked for Washington's reaction to the linkage drawn between the Gulf crisis and the Kashmir row, U.S. officials said Washington would only reject any plan that calls for "any kind of linkage" including the Palestine-Israeli dispute. It was surprising that Pakistan, having known and accepted the United Nations resolution which rules out conditionalities and linkage to the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, still expects to

Link the Kashmir issue with the "Gulf crisis." Officials here said the Pakistan plan remained a non-starter.

U.S. officials said Nawaz Sharif's plan was presumably a result of "the strong domestic pressure" his Government faces on the Gulf issue, as also probably efforts by Islamabad to "be actors on the international stage." With many countries making efforts to mediate a peaceful solution, Pakistan could have decided to join the ranks, some officials and U.S. congressional sources said. They also see religion as a factor determining Pakistan's decision to involve itself in peace-finding missions.

Pakistan would not find support in the U.S. for any such plan that even supports linkage. Moreover, the U.S. stood against an internationalisation of the bilateral Kashmir dispute.

For a clearer perspective of the issues and political values involved in the Palestine problem, it is necessary to appreciate the nature of three major conflicting determinants, namely Arab Nationalism, Zionism and Big Power Politics, whose convergence and interaction go to create the mosaic of never-ending tensions and conflicts in West Asia. But let us first revert to the origins of the problems, which may be squarely stated thus: the Arabs say that Palestine, an indivisible part of their Nation, has been forcibly occupied by European and American Jews under the guidance of the aggressive international Zionist movement, aided and abetted, first by Great Britain and then by the United States and other Western powers, thereby not only threatening the unity of the Arab people, but also uprooting more than a million Arabs from their homeland, and thus forming an inimical State, whose policies and programme have no regional relevance, and whose belligerent existence is in reality an extension of Western power in the Arab heartland. The Zionists, on the other hand, say that their right to immigration and rule in Palestine rests not only on the claim that that was the 'original' home of the Jews about which a Divine Promise is given to the descendants of Abraham as contained in the *Book of the Genesis*, Chapter 12:7 and Chapter 15:18, which says: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates", but also on the title implicit in the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 and more than that on their own 'actual' occupation of the lands, notwithstanding the means and methods of acquiring it. To enable an objective appraisal of the conflicting claims, it will be necessary to keep in mind the governing ideals of Arab Nationalism and Zionism.<sup>6</sup>

To put it briefly, Arab Nationalism has had three major objectives in the three main phases of its evolution in this century: (i) 1908-20, it was a movement against Ottoman Turkish oppression, whose main thrust was the resurrector of the Arab personality; (ii) 1920-45, it was a move-

ment against Western domination of their lands, striving for the consolidation of newly freed Arab entities; (iii) 1945 onward, it is a movement struggling to build Arab Unity, promote democratization, dismantle the structure of Israeli sovereignty in Palestine, and combat Western domination. It is evident that Arab Nationalism has several levels of consciousness, internal contradictions, divisive currents and dichotomy of leadership. No other national movement has to reconcile the divergence of so many of its 'sovereign components' whose regional difference, economic diversity, political rivalries, and leadership conflicts vitiate the very ethos of unity and concerted action. But nevertheless, in its broad sweep and main objectives, its main segment, particularly as represented by UAR striving for Arab unity and consolidation, subscribes to such political values in its internal working as political secularization, socio-economic modernization, religious reform and mass education, non-alignment, decolonization, and Afro-Asian solidarity in its foreign policy. Normal sympathy for the Arab cause in most of the Afro-Asian countries stem generally from the recognition of this progressive character of the Arab revolution. Zionism in its spiritual meaning - the messianic hope of Judaism was kept alive through the ages while the Jews beginning in the writings of Leo Pinsker. In *Automancipation*, published in 1982, he claimed that since anti-semitism was an inescapable passion of the non-Jewish people, and it was provoked by the fact that the Jews constituted an 'abnormal nation', therefore, the only solution for the Jews was to create a state of their own. Then Theodor Herzl published in 1895 his pamphlet *Judenstaat*, which embodied the basic tenets of modern Zionism. It became the 'laboratory manual' for Zionist work and tactics. The following year, in 1896, the First World Zionist Organization at Basle accepted Herzl's thesis. Argentina and Uganda were first mentioned as possible 'homeland' of the Jews, but in 1906, the Zionists rejected these proposals and opted for Palestine. Herzlian Zionism, which inspired Chaim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion - the founders of Israel - bases its claim to Palestine on three premises and a conclusion: (1) that the Jews constitute a race and a nation; (2) that this race and the nation is a lineal descendant of the Hebrew nation - thus the Jews have been living in exile (Diaspora) since the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70, waiting for the Day of Return to Palestine; (3) that Anti-semitism is bound to break out sooner or later, as the mere existence of the Jews in a non-Jewish environment creates anti-semitic reaction. Therefore, the Jews must return to the promised land of the Zion. At this point certain pertinent queries may be raised in order to reveal the pseudo-scientific and illogical deductions of the Zionists: (i) Are the Jews (all the world over) a Nation? Similarly, are the Christians, Muslims and Buddhists a Nation? (ii) Can it rationally be

accepted that the Polish, the Rumanian, and the Ukrainian Jews, for instance, are lineal descendants of Abraham and the Hebrews? (iii) Were Hebrews a Nation or a Race or a Tribe or Religious entity? (iv) Is the so-called dispersal of the 12 tribes of the Jews a legend or based on historical evidence? (v) Were not the inhabitants of the pre-Israel Palestine - the Arabs and the Jews - more likely to be the descendants of the ancient Hebrews? (vi) Are not the Arabs also Semitic and descendants of Abraham, and if so, could not the so-called prophesy and promise refer also to them? (vii) Was Palestine only the home of the Jews, or equally and probably more of the Arabs for more than 15 centuries? (viii) Can the original homeland theory be a sufficient ground for forcible establishment of a sovereign state, against the wish of 90% of the indigenous people? While pondering over these questions, the obscurantist, racist, and anti-modernistic character of Zionist claim would become self-evident. Four factors helped the Zionists in achieving their aim in Palestine: (i) the decline and final dismemberment of the Ottoman Turkish Empire; (ii) the emergence of Britain as the dominating imperial power in West Asia, after the first World War; (iii) the social backwardness, political immaturity, internecine quarrels and general powerlessness of the Arabs, particularly till the end of the Second World War; and (iv) the support of the Western nations to the plan of mass Jewish immigration from Europe - based partly on a "sense of guilt", partly due to pressure of World Jewry, and partly as a design to have a western beach-head in the Arab lands. After the formation of Israel in 1948 the massive political, economic and strategic backing of the United States of America has been the single biggest factor for the support of the State of Israel and its policies in the West Asian region. The most significant development in this context was the Belfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, not so much for what it said, but for what it betrayed. The effective pressure of the Zionist on Britain was revealed in the British ambivalence towards the Arabs, which in the next three decades was successfully exploited by the Zionist it was in pursuance of their design to uproot the Arabs from Palestine, and transform Palestine into a Jewish State. Firstly, the declaration is self-contradictory in its intentions, and by implication violative of the simple principles of justice and trust. Duplicitous has been a hall-mark of British imperial policy in West Asia in the first two decades of this century. Even the impartial Americans at that time considered the declaration in this light as is clear in the now famous King-Crane Report of 1919, which had been ignored by the United States Government and virtually suppressed under the pressure of the World Jewry. In parts the King-Crane Report said: "We recommend...serious modification of the extreme Zionist Program for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a

Jewish State". They added, "...it can hardly be doubted that the extreme Zionist programmes must be greatly modified. For a 'national home' for the Jewish people is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the 'civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'....the Zionist looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, by various forms of purchase." The Report emphasized that ".....it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine-nearly nine-tenths of the whole - are emphatically against the entire Zionist program." Retrospectively, it is clear that the two most decisive factors facilitating the formation of Israel were: (i) British ambivalence verging on duplicity and betrayal of trust of the Arabs; and (ii) Systematic immigration of the Jews into Palestine between 1922 and 1948. No more eloquent testimony of usurpation is needed than a glance at the table of changing pattern of population in Palestine between 1919 and 1948. In 1919 the total estimated population of Palestine was 590,000, of which the Jews constituted about 55,000 or just 9%. The first census was taken in 1922. Between 1922 and 1930 while the Arab population (Muslims and Christians) increased from 660,641 to 818,135, that is, by 23%, the Jewish population increased from 83,790 to 164,796, that is, by about 100%. In the next decade 1931-41, the Arab population grew from 848,607 to 1,068,433 that is, by 25% while the Jewish population from 176,604 to 463,535 that is, by about 250%, thereby improving their position in 1940. The increase in Jewish immigration was accompanied by an impressive import of Jewish capital estimated by the British White Paper at nearly 80 million Palestine Pounds or 400 million Dollars by the end of 1936. In the next seven years 1940-47, taking advantage of the War and the persecution of the Jews in Germany, the Jewish immigrants increased phenomenally, by 1947. But the worst persecution and uprooting of the Arabs from their homeland can be suddenly realized by remembering that in just one year's time, 1947-48 - the year when Israel was formed - while the Jewish population increased to 756,000 the Arab population dwindled to just 156,000. Thus, in thirty years the Zionists through the immigration of foreign Jews and uprooting of local Arabs, changed the Arab-Jewish proportion from 91:9 to 9:91 - a feat unparalleled in the history of civilized mankind. Jewish immigration between 1919 and 1948 was 484,000 and between 1948 and 1951 it was 510,034. They mostly came in six waves of immigration (aliyah): 1882-1903; from Poland, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Yemen, Tunisia and Iraq. The proportion of the 'Oriental Jews' grew even as their role in

body-politic is inconsequential. By 1918, about 20,000 Oriental Jews were settled. Between 1919 and 1948, only 44,800 Jews from Asia and Africa - a mere 10.4% of the total immigrants. In 1964, the population of the Oriental Jews was 643,000 out of a total population of 2,239,000, that is, only 29%. Thus it is clear that Israel in its demographic composition is predominantly the colony of the non-Palestinian, non-Asian, European Jews. And this reflects considerably in the pattern of its state-structure, economy, educational systems, foreign policy orientation and generally in its world outlook.

The chequered history of Palestine prior to the establishment of Israel in 1948, may be summarised as follows: In or about 1250 B.C. Moses brought the children of Israel in a massive Exodus from Egypt. The Hebrew Jews under their famous prophet-kings Saul, David and Solomon ruled Palestine, after subjugating the local population whom they derisively called Philistines. In 721 B.C. Assyria destroyed the Kingdom of Israel. In 586 B.C. the Chaldeans destroyed the First Jewish Temple. Then came the Romans and the Byzantines. In 66 A.D. the Romans burned the Third Jewish Temple and dispersed the Jews. By Fourth century A.D. most of the Jews had either been converted to Christianity or left Palestine. In 637 A.D. Caliph Omar entered Jerusalem after the conquest of Palestine by the Muslims. Then came the rule of the Umayyads, the Abbasides, the Mamluks, the Crusaders and finally the Ottoman Turks in 1516, who ruled Palestine as a district of Syria - Sanjaq-i-Jerusalem - till 1917. With first World War, came the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, and the establishment of the British Mandate 1922-47. The creation of Israel has not only been the reversal of history and the negation of the right of self-determination of an indigenous people, but worst still it represents a dangerous precedent, more obscurantist in its origins than Pakistan and as much reactionary as the 'get-away' Pretoria White regime of South Africa. It is a 'garrison state' of the immigrant European Jews, financed by the European and American Jewish monopolists and politically and militarily backed by United States power and supported generally by the Western world. Even if it be a reality, whose recognition as a fait accompli is canvassed by many well-intentioned innocents, it is certainly an abnormal and an aberrated reality. It is generally not known, or if known overlooked conveniently, that the flow of foreign capital into Israel during the last 40 years of its existence has been relatively greater than the flow of foreign capital in any part of the world. More than 40% of the State budget is allocated to overt and covert military expenditure and 17% goes towards the payment of

external and internal debts. Till 1965 it depended heavily on the receipt of German reparations. Such is the financial basis of the much-advertised welfare and progressive State of Israel. The threatening *Law of the Return* promulgated on 5 July, 1950 gives every Jew anywhere the right of immigration to Israel. This extraordinary stipulation on a statute-book, unknown to any country and State, it is alarming to the neighbouring Arabs, who fear that the technologically advanced Western Jews, supported by Anti-Arab big-powers, might well try to capture the entire 'fertile crescent' belt of Arab Asia, which indeed the Zionists consider as their 'promised land' - the land between the river Nile and River Euphrates. The belligerent posture of Israel, its numberless sorties into Arab lands, and more than that the 1956 Suez war and the 1967 expansion into Gaza, Senai, Jerusalem, Western Jordan and parts of Syria, is proof enough of Israel's desire, if also not a clear design, to grab bit by bit, through tension, terror and conflict, as much of the "promised land" as possible. Indeed those with vision and human compassion in the Western world have never lowered their voice of protest against the Zionist actions and design of aggression. One is tempted to quote extensively Prof. Arnold Toynbee's powerful indictment that sums up what many fair-minded people all the world over would like to say. He said: "...it is a moral tragedy that the descendants of the Jewish exiles should now have inflicted on the present-day Arab population of Palestine the wrong which the Jews' own ancestors once suffered. What hope is there for human nature if we inflict on others the very wrongs that we ourselves have suffered? ....In taking the Palestinian Arabs' homes and property by force, the Israelis were sinning not only against their own conscience, in the light of their own people's past experience, but also against the conscience of mankind... if the Jews had a claim to be given a piece of territory, this should have been done at the expense of the Western nations that had done its worst to exterminate the Jews. If the creation of a new state of Israel was judged to be a legitimate form of compensation to the surviving Jews, the territory for this state should have been taken from the Europeans, not from the Arabs. The new Israel should not have been carved out of Arab Palestine; it should have been carved out of Central Europe.....I should like to see the greatest possible number of the Palestinian refugees not only recover their homes and property, but return home under a Palestinian Arab Government."<sup>8</sup>

The Palestinian people's right of return, or repatriation, lies at the heart of the Palestine question for reasons which relate to past history and future prospects, as well as to current realities. This right arises from the most basic facts of the Arab-Zionist conflict, i.e., centuries of the Palestinian

Arab society's continuity in the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan river on the one hand; and the Zionist movement's usurpation of Palestine and the expulsion of the majority of its native inhabitants on the other. Equally, the fulfilment of the Palestinian right to repatriation is a precondition for the creation of any just, democratic and viable society in that territory in the future.

In this light, it is ironic though not lacking in explanation - that the majority of plans that have been floated for resolving the West Asia conflict, especially in the post 1967 era, gloss over the Palestinian right to return, if not eliminating it altogether from the agenda. However, it is less understandable when this right is dropped from proposals presented by those who claim to have the interests of the Palestinian people at heart. It would seem that the right of any human being to live in her/her own home and/or country is so elementary as to render equivocation impossible and discussion superfluous. Yet today, four million Palestinians live in exile. The need for Palestinians to struggle for repatriation is predicated on the nature of Zionism which aims not only to colonize the land, but also to replace the Palestinian Arabs. Contrary to the Zionist myth that the 1948 war erupted when the Arab armies entered Palestine in May 1948, Zionist military operations to conquer the land and expel its rightful owners began soon after the November 29, 1947, UN resolution on partition was adopted. Four hundred thousand Palestinians had been driven from their homes before May 14, 1948, while another 350,000 had been displaced by the time armistice agreements were reached with the neighbouring Arab states in 1949; hence the 750,000 original Palestinian refugees. During and immediately following the war, over 400 Palestinian villages were wiped off the map, while thousands more civilians were evicted from the demilitarized zones and other areas. A set of laws was passed allowing the state to confiscate the land of "absentees". Besides covering Palestinians who were expelled by the Zionist military forces or who might have been travelling at the time, this term was applied to 30,000 Palestinians who fled their homes at the onset of the violence, but never left the country. UN estimates at the time put the value of Palestinian property taken over by Israel at 120 billion British pounds; Arab League estimates are ten times higher. Regardless of varying figures, most researchers agree that the new state of Israel would hardly have been viable without the assets thus acquired. The fact that Palestine as such was usurped, colonized and transformed into Israel means that exercising the Palestinian right of return acquired a state-building dimension in order to create a framework for decolonization. In this sense, the right of return is inseparably linked with

the rights of self determination and statehood. For example, the creation of an Arab state in Mandate Palestine was stipulated by the Partition resolution of 1947, but the Palestinian right to statehood was swept away by the Zionist military offensive. The partition resolution formally adopted the idea of an Arab state, but this was divorced from its necessary complement; self-determination. No popular referendum was held in Mandate Palestine where the Arab citizens constituted two-thirds of the inhabitants, and owned 90 per cent of the land. Nonetheless, 56 per cent of Palestine's most fertile land was assigned to the Jewish state projected by the partition resolution. Of course, the point here is not to quibble over percentages of territory or population, but to stress that the Palestine issue must be addressed comprehensively. The Zionist movement adopted a comprehensive approach, "resolving" the issue by brute force, occupying 75 per cent of Palestine in 1948, and the rest in 1967.<sup>9</sup>

UN resolution 181 (the partition plan) can serve as a point of departure and legal basis in the quest for a democratic Palestine, but it must be linked with the other inalienable Palestinian rights which have also been recognized by the UN over the years, as in the PLO's peace initiative of November 1988.

Of the four million displaced Palestinians today, 2.5 million are registered as refugees by UNRWA - which includes camp dwellers in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip another 1.5 million are unregistered refugees. It is often assumed that the right of return concerns chiefly Palestinians in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and other places of exile abroad. Such a view not only negates the unit of the Palestinian people and their cause; it also overlooks the present in reality and needs of virtually every Palestinian community.

Today, three-quarters of the Gaza Strip's population is refugees displaced from 1948 occupied Palestine. The same applies to over half the West Bank Palestinians. The masses of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have not dropped the right of return as is sometimes projected by those promoting partial solutions. Most recently, this right has been referred to in almost all the calls issued by the United National Leadership of the Uprising. The centrality of the right of return is not outdated, but has become more poignant under the combined impact of the intifada and the current Israeli reality wherein "transfer" of Palestinians still in their homeland, and the massive influx of new Jewish immigrants, are pervading characteristics. The right of return has distinct relevance for Palestinians living in the Zionist state, in so much as this right is correctly understood as a part of the

decolonization process. The situation of West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinians after the 1967 occupation has not been fundamentally different in this respect. On a part with the masses of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the right of return for Palestinians in Israel entails equal access to the resources of their homeland, a return to an integral society, the chance to build a democratic system of government and to choose a path of economic development that encourages social justice. This obviously entails deZionizations. The Zionist authorities had been acutely aware that right below the surface of Israel lies Palestine. The original Israeli national insurance law provided extra financial support to families for each child they had. Palestinians who paid taxes and insurance as part of this plan were found to be benefiting comparatively more than Jewish citizens, by virtue of having larger families. Thus, whether consciously or not, Palestinians had begun the demographic battle simply by having children which has symbolized a kind of "return" at least to visibility within their denied homeland. An equally instinctive "return" was staged by Palestinians in the sixties when increasing numbers of Israeli Jews migrated to urban areas seeking better paid jobs rather than working in agricultural settlements. At the same time, they leased their land to Palestinians who cultivated it in return for a portion of the crops. This led Palestinian families to remigrate and live in tents or shelters near the leased land which in some cases had been their own. New laws were passed, imposing fines on Israeli settlements that leased their land to preempt the Palestinian back-to-the-land movement.<sup>10</sup>

Article 13 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." Palestinians' attempts to return to their homes began before the 1948 war ended. The great majority who fled their town or village had not left the country, but simply evacuated from areas where the Zionist forces were on the offensive, to take temporary refuge in safer area. The refugees too little with them in terms of food and clothing, which attests not only to the violence and fear that motivated their flight, but also to their assumption that this was not a permanent move. Many petitioned the Israeli authorities to return to their home within months of being evicted. Refused permission, many of the internal refugees in fact returned on their own and settled near the sight of their home villages. Today there are about 50 such small communities; they are not recognized by the Israeli authorities and are in constant danger of being uprooted again. For those expelled from the country the desire to return hardened into resolve and increasing consciousness of the political implications of their plight. As



part of UNRWA's 1956-1957 report, the director told the UN General Assembly: "the great mass of the refugees continues to believe that a grave injustice has been done to them and to express a desire to return to their homeland...." This desire was expressed in action as well as in daily life-in a conversation, with 'Democratic Palestine', an exiled Gaza activist recounted a number of ways in which belief in return had molded social customs and everyday life in the refugee camps in the Strip. His own family's house remains bare of all but necessities, as his parents never considered it their real home despite raising their six children, there, half of whom are involved in the Palestinian resistance today. The initial arrangement of the camps sprang up in patterns corresponding to pre-1948 Palestine; with refugees from the same town or village grouping together. Still today, neighbouring neighbourhoods near these names. In Shati camp, for example you will find Asdud, Jaffa and Herbia. Babies were often named after the family's home village or town. When asked where they are from, children invariably answer with the family's place of origin, despite having been born in a refugee camp. Women continue to make and wear dresses with the embroidery pattern peculiar to their own village, while songs referring to the home village are sung at weddings and other occasions. When arranging the marriages of their sons and daughters, refugee families kept the prospects of returning home in mind, preferring couples to be from the same village for the sake of keeping the family and landholdings together. At the same time, many refused to buy land in the Strip even when prices were low. Similar phenomena are to be found in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the West Bank as well. In addition, the implicit dilemma in the nature of the camp has continued over the years. Structural improvement of the camps was not always welcome because it hinted at resettlement - the negation of repatriation. In fact, there's no real solution to this friction, except by deciding on a case by case basis what will benefit the struggle for return. What is certain is that the camps remain as a symbol of the will to return. As a camp dweller and UNRWA employee told the authors of *Stateless in Gaza*: "We will not leave the camps. The next move can only be back to Palestine. It is a question of life and death survival on our land." The first wave of physical return after 1948 was based on individual initiative and occurred almost instinctively as people struggle to survive in the wake of upheaval. The returnees were most often peasants trying to salvage their possessions and stored food supplies, harvest their crops or visit relatives who had managed to remain back home. Those discovered crossing the borders were dubbed "infiltrators" and killed by the Israel authorities. The New York Times of January 2, 1953, reported that in the previous year, 394 such "infiltrators" had been killed, 227 wounded and 2,595 captured. By the mid-fifties, the

quest for return began to assume the form of organized guerilla operations, especially across the armistice lines from the Gaza Strip, then under Egyptian administration. From the beginning, there were international efforts focused on the question of return. Count Folke Bernadotte, sent to Palestine as a UN mediator-in summer 1948, submitted a report to the General Assembly which inter alia stressed this right: "....no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the right of the Arab refugee to return to the home from which he has been dislodged by the hazards and strategy of the armed conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine." September 17th, the day after he submitted his report, Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem by LEHI terrorists headed by today's Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Sharmi. Thus, the Zionists stuck their first blow against UN enforcement of the right of return. The Israeli invasion and occupation of the rest of Palestine, the Golan Heights and Sinai was a result of its expansionist aspirations; by pushing back the borders, the Zionist state also pushed many 1948 refugees further away from their homes. The 1967 war uprooted 145,000 UNRWA - registered refugees for the second time in less than two decades; these constituted somewhat less than half of all the displaced of this war.<sup>11</sup>

Again, like in 1948, under the impact of Zionist aggression, families fled their homes. Again, especially in the West Bank, they tried to return to their villages immediately, but were blocked by Israeli troops. In many cases, they were rounded, up onto trucks, driven to the Jordan River and expelled. Others made it to their villages only to witness their houses being destroyed.

Immediately after the war, the UN Security Council and General Assembly issued resolutions for the return of the refugees from the recent fighting. This time, Israel announced that it would comply. That this was only a tactical gesture, designed to ward off international pressure, became clear in practice. Two British MPs, Ian Gilmour and Dennis Walters, who visited Aman and Jerusalem, subsequently wrote the following in the London Times of July 27, 1967: "Most people in Britain probably believe that Israel has agreed to their (the refugees) return and that repatriation is now satisfactorily proceeding. Nothing could be farther from the truth." The 1967 Israeli aggression did not, however, extinguish the Palestinian will to return. On the contrary, by increasing the number of Palestinians expelled and living under occupation, it prodded the upsurge of the Palestinian national movement, the armed resistance organizations formed from 1965 onward developed dramatically in the post-1967 period, and the battle for return was waged on the basis of guerilla warfare strategy. A strong motivating factor for this growth was the refugees' desire for return. The survey conducted among this sample of the 1967 refugees revealed

that 75 per cent of them definitely wished to return; of the 18 per cent whose wish to return was conditional, the condition most often mentioned was the end of the Israeli occupation. Among the seven per cent who did not want to return, some mentioned that their known involvement in the resistance would mean immediate arrest. However, one of the 75 per cent said: "we want to return very much even if we have to sneak in and die there."<sup>12</sup>

During his visit PLO chief Yasser Arafat's special envoy to Indian Jamal Soruani stated in New Delhi that the PLO did not support Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. But the fact is that the frustrated Palestinians have been lured by President Saddam Hussein's attempt to link Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait with Israel's from the West Bank and Gaza. The refusal of the US to accept the linkage and the start of the Gulf war has meant the loss of much of the aid the Palestinians were getting from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries as also of hundreds of thousands of jobs in Kuwait and other Gulf countries. The only hope for them is a negotiated end to the war in which the Palestinian problem might also be addressed. Hence the PLO's anxiety to "activate" India and the Non-Aligned Movement to find ways and means of bringing about a ceasefire and a solution to the problem. Yasser Arafat did not take a stand against Iraq's occupation of Kuwait at the Arab summit in August 1990. This was because he was beholden to President Saddam Hussein for playing host to PLO cadres. Also, the "linkage" by President Hussein was an after-thought, and the Palestinians thought it could be an opportunity of achieving what they had been striving for decades. Once the linkage was rejected by the US - and rightly so - and the war started the equations changed. More so, because of American gratitude to Israel for staying out of the war despite the Scud missile attacks on it. The Palestinians now fear that the US has given some secret assurance to Israel about not pressurising it on the Palestinian issue. The ray of hope for the Palestinians is that the anger among Arabs and the need for a durable West Asian peace will make the Americans realise the urgency of a solution of the Palestinian question. Most of continental Europe has already come round to accepting that the Palestinians must also have a homeland. The third world has always backed their cause. That Iraq will ultimately lose the war is known. Washington, however, cannot rest on its victory. It has to work for a settlement of the Palestinian question.<sup>13</sup>

While the official position of the Bush administration with regard to peace and security in the Gulf region remains a good deal obscure at this time, strategic advice rendered by people so close to the decision-makers leave ample room for anxieties. Henry K. Kissinger, whose advice and counsel is highly regarded in the Bush administration, wants a new balance of power to be created in the region under American leadership, with the

active support of Washington's Arab allies and Israel, but excluding the USSR, the European Powers (of course except Britain) and Japan. He rejects the idea of a Palestinian state and suggests a gradual "intermediate approach", by which he means a meeting of the US, Israel and friendly Arab states with the UN Secretary-General attending, but with no United Nations scaffolding. A number of White House task forces are said to have worked out an American architecture of Gulf-Mid-East peace and security. "At the heart of the new security structure would be a strengthened Egypt-Saudi Arabia axis backed by super power guarantees", reports the Sunday Times. A page-long analysis of the post-war scenario in the British newspaper, Daily Telegraph, predicts that Israel will resist all pressures to make peace with the Arabs bartering occupied land for assured territorial borders and security. From knowledgeable quarters come warnings that no one can refuse to heed and ponder. David Kimche, formerly second in command of Israel's Mosad, warns that the coalition may win the war and still lose the region. If Saddam won the war of passion and propaganda, the region would emerge "more fanatical, more extreme and more anti-Western than ever before." Analysts of the Daily Telegraph echo: "From the Western point of view, one of the most dangerous consequences of Saddam Hussein's defeat would be a resurgence of pro-Indian Islamic militancy among the country's long-suppressed Shiite majority." These are not the only realities that nations must take into account, and India is one of them. The decline of the Soviet Union's power stature has obliged Egypt as well as Syria to get close to the United States. Whatever the level of popular discontent in the Arab-Islamic countries with American policies and the native regimes' coalition with Washington, the "resurgence" has so far remained politically ineffectual, no government, not even Morocco and Pakistan, has had to change its Gulf policy. Whatever "charisma" may stick to Saddam Hussein, no one in the Arab-Islamic world will forget that he had invaded Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990 without provocation. Also, Arafat is no longer a hero of the Arab masses. He has been more used by different Arab rulers than he has been able to use them to get his Palestinian state. In any case, no Palestinian homeland can be created without the full cooperation of the United States and without Israel's accommodation of the Palestinian aspirations. It cannot be set up by war, or even by mass political action. It can come about only as a political settlement.<sup>14</sup>

An organisation, International Saddam Vichar Manch, which claims to be a pressure group for the Palestinian people, held a press meet in New



Delhi on March 8, 1991 to outline the intended steps to liberate the Palestinians from the clutches of Israel, the Zionist power.

It stated that a number of public meetings, rallies and lectures would be organised to make the people aware of the problem of Palestine. The organisation plans to involve Muslims world-wide to liberate the Palestinians.

"We have contacted organisations in Pakistan, Bangladesh and a number of other Muslim countries and all of them have agreed to join us." Claimed Anis Durani, president of the Manch.<sup>15</sup>

Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat communicated to Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar on January 22, 1991 the appreciation of the Palestinians for support and solidarity with their cause expressed in the condolence message on the assassination of his top aides Salah Khalaf and Hayel Abdel Hamid in Tunis on Jan 15, 1991.

Referring to the conflict in the Gulf in which PLO and Jordan are on Iraq's side, Arafat affirmed that his people were confident of victory.

The united leadership of Intifada, the Palestinian rebellion in the occupied territories, has expressed support for Iraq and called on Palestinians to "stay firmly with the PLO and Yasser Arafat."

The declaration in Jerusalem, on March 6, 1991 paid tribute to the "wise Iraqi leadership and its heroic army for their just struggle against aggression. The Palestinian people are also proud of the PLO's brave and determined support to Iraq during the Persian Gulf War",.

The declaration warned that "many circles, both outside and inside the Arab world are trying to undermine the PLO's role". "The united Intifada leadership calls on all fighters and the Palestinian people to close their ranks even more firmly around the PLO and show everybody that it alone has the right and the responsibility to represent the Palestinians in any negotiations on peace in the West Asia and in settling the Palestinian question", the declaration said.

India's influence will be exercised in the interests of Palestinians more than some of their Arab brothers are of likely to do. Therefore, even while pursuing our objective of the last 43 years of getting justice for the Palestinians time has come for this country to think afresh about our strategy vis-a-vis Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Balked by the western countries in its attempts to internationalise the Kashmir issue, Pakistan is working hard to line up the Islamic world behind its vituperative campaign to malign India accusing New Delhi of having unleashed a reign of terror in Kashmir Valley.

The report refers to the 20th OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in Istanbul in August 1991 and recalls how it had condemned the "massive violations of human rights of the people of Kashmir" and demanded that India respect the rights of the Kashmir people including the right of self-determination. It distorts history to project India as an aggressor who had occupied Kashmir in 1947, ignoring the fact that it was Pakistani troops who entered the valley after it had duly acceded to the Union of India. The report ignores the fact that it was India that had approached the UN Security Council and had accepted UN-supervised cease-fire at a time when the Pakistani troops were on the run. It makes fulsome references to India having agreed to hold a plebiscite in the State but overlooks the fact that a plebiscite was to be held only after Pakistan had withdrawn all its forces from the State. Instead of vacating its aggression, Pakistan formed a puppet Government in parts of the State captured by it in 1947.

The report makes a passing reference to the Simla accord but gives precedence to the UN resolutions of over four decades ago, without mentioning Pakistan's failure to withdraw all its troops from Jammu and Kashmir. All the familiar Pakistani arguments form the core of the Secretary-General's report "on the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir." There is no mention of India having released over 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war in 1972 after the signing of the Simla accord by Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The Secretary General has missed the central point which binds India and Pakistan to solve all outstanding disputes including Kashmir bilaterally. He makes the point that the Government of India had not responded to his proposal to allow an OIC team to visit Kashmir because India felt it would constitute an "interference in its internal affairs."

Given the guiles of Pakistani diplomacy, it is a foregone conclusion that the "sixth Islamic summit of kings and heads of State and Governments" should endorse Islamabad's views as presented by the Secretary-General in his report.

The organisation of Islamic countries was persuaded by Pakistan to include the Kashmir issue on the agenda of the 19th Islamic Foreign Ministers' conference in Cairo in August 1990. Subsequently at their meeting a year later in Istanbul Pakistan scored once again when the OIC asked the Secretary-General of the organisation to report to the OIC summit at its meeting in Dakar 'Senegal held between December 9 and 12, 1991.

Islam is not the only card that Islamabad played in its efforts to woo the Islamic countries. Pakistan's role in the Gulf war, its role in L'affaire Bank of Credit and Commerce (BCCI), taking due care of the Gulf susceptibilities in the matter, were two other factors that were brought into play. The Pakistani nuclear capability, often described as Islamic nuclear capability, was used to establish Pakistani preeminence as a potential nuclear power of no mean ability. Add to it the Indian unwillingness to meet the propaganda offensive and it makes for an easy killing which Pakistan did go in for.

In a report tailor-made to serve Pakistani interests, the Secretary-General pillories India for its various acts of "inhumanity against Muslim brethren in Kashmir." Any number of horror stories have been invented and some reports of Indian human rights groups culled in a manner that would shock the original authors of these reports.

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## THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE

Only a week after its liberation, parts of Kuwait City are beginning to resemble the anarchy of Beirut, with gunmen controlling streets, dozens of Palestinians being kidnapped from their homes by armed civilians. Western ambassadors and relief agencies have been pleading with the few Kuwaiti ministers who have arrived here from Saudi Arabia to restore law and order before they lose control of the capital. Even the Kuwaiti army, however, seems set on taking its revenge against the 240,000- strong Palestinian community, some of whom collaborated with the Iraqi occupation forces. On Sunday morning, Kuwaiti forces drove 12 armoured vehicles into the Palestinian Hwali district, shooting in the air, ordering Palestinians to close their shops and beating civilians who fell into their hands. American special forces troops accompanying the Kuwaitis did nothing to stop this indiscipline, and shouted obscenities at journalists who asked why they did not intervene.<sup>1</sup>

The British embassy staff have expressed their concern to the Kuwaitis and to the Americans about the increasing anarchy in the city and the threat to thousands of Palestinian lives. Palestinians said on Sunday that as many as 400 young men had been kidnapped from their homes by armed Kuwaitis over the past three days. As more evidence emerges of the atrocities committed by the Iraqis here, there is a growing fear that Allied forces may have to be used to police Kuwait City - something American commander General Norman Schwarzkopf desperately wishes to avoid.

At night, gangs of armed men are stopping cars in Kuwait City with Kalashnikov rifles left behind by the Iraqis, apparently searching for Palestinians. Little attempt has been made by the Kuwaiti or the Saudi

army to prevent the activities of these gunmen, many of whom claim, doubtfully, to be members of the Kuwaiti resistance movement.

The seafront corniche is filled daily with Kuwaitis still celebrating their liberation, but many are now brandishing automatic rifles, firing in delight over the roofs or nearby buildings, including the British and American embassies.

In Hwali, there is evidence enough that the Palestinian community is in grave danger. Sara Moussa, for example, watched both her sons, Tahseen and Amin, taken from their home on Friday morning by six Kuwaitis armed with rifles. "They searched our home, they tied their hands and blindfolded them," she said. "When they told the Kuwaitis not to touch their sisters, the gunmen beat them with their rifles. Then they put them both in the trunk of a car and drove them away. I have not seen them since."

Tamam Salman's 23-year-old son, Ibrahim was taken by gunmen at the same time, thrown into the boot of a car and driven away. She says that when she asked for help from a Kuwaiti policeman, he spat at her "because I am a Palestinian". Few Kuwaitis, of course, would shed any tears for the two women, one of whom, weeping bitterly, seized a Koran and swore upon the book that her sons never collaborated with the Iraqis. Kuwaitis also living in Hwali call the Palestinians hypocrites. "I had a Palestinian friend who worked for the Iraqis," a Kuwait student told me. "One day, during the occupation, I saw him on a road checkpoint with Iraqi soldiers; looking for some Kuwaitis. I turned my car away so he would not find me. He was my friend, but he collaborated. How can we trust the Palestinians now?"

But not all Palestinians did collaborate. The Kuwaiti resistance say that 5 per cent of their members were Palestinians but Yasser Arafat's alliance with Saddam Hussein and the sheer numbers of murders and kidnappings committed by the Iraqis have largely destroyed the relationship between Palestinians and Kuwaitis. The American military authorities, despite warnings from the British and the Red Cross, still seem to act in ignorance of this.

When three Kuwaiti soldiers began to beat up a Palestinian boy on a bicycle in Hwali on Sunday, Colin Smith of the Observer and I intervened, physically restraining the Kuwaiti troops and ordering them to lower their weapons. Several of the Kuwaiti armoured vehicles were flying American flags. But the special forces troops accompanying the Kuwaitis did nothing to help. When I asked the American officer why he allowed the Kuwaitis to beat civilians, he replied: "You having a nice day? We don't want your sort around here with your dirty rumours. You have a big mouth. This is martial law, boy. F.....off."

US officers at the American Embassy in Kuwait City confirmed that the troops involved were from the special forces when The Independent provided them with the serial number of their Humvee military vehicle. "We've had a colonel of ours threatened by armed men. Things are getting completely out of control."

US special forces attached to the Kuwaitis have no names on their tunics, but have small Kuwaiti flags stitched to their uniforms. US policy is to refuse to take any part in internal policing in Kuwait City lest American troops become sucked into a civil war, as they did in Lebanon in 1983. But unless they can impose discipline on the Kuwaiti forces here - and on some of their own special forces troops - they may have no option.

Emir Sheikh Javer al-Ahmed al-Sabah and Crown Prince Sheikh Sad al-Abdullah al-Saleem al-Sabah remain in Saudi Arabia allegedly unable to return home because Kuwait is still thought not safe enough for their presence. In the meantime, opposition leaders are increasing their demands for democracy. Many in the resistance movement support the opposition - and the resistance still has its guns.

"Shout for victory. O brothers; shout for your victory and the victory of all honourable people.

O Iraqis. You have fought 30 countries, and all the evil and the largest machine of war and destruction in the world that surrounds them."

These were words from what appeared to be Saddam Hussein's swan song on February 26, 1991 announcing the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. A day later Kuwait was declared free of Iraqi occupation. Exactly a week after Saddam Hussein's "victory" speech, the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council issued a statement in the name of its leader annulling its annexation and renouncing all claims on Kuwait, and pledged to return all stolen property. Earlier Saddam Hussein abandoned his "principled support" for the Palestinians linking the occupation of Kuwait with the vacation of Israeli-occupied areas. George Bush's "just war" raised plenty of questions. Saddam Hussein's rapid political surrender after a terrible military defeat answered some of them. At the end of the day millions of Iraqis are asking: "What was all this for?"

It is only after the Iraqis were ejected from Kuwait that some of their actions are coming to the surface. Charred bodies in morgues, mass graves of infants, surviving human beings with half their bodies burnt after they were dipped in a bath of acid. The catalogue of crimes is long. Whatever

they were, the Iraqis were surely not an occupying army. A occupation force ordinarily focusses on weeding out dissidents and tries to win over hearts and minds. The sympathy Kuwait has won can be neutralised, or wiped out, by one factor - if there is a wholesale purge of more than a lakh of Palestinians who did not run away. Unfortunately innocent Palestinians are being hunted down in the locality of Hawalli and sympathy for Kuwait could very well dissipate if this becomes a trend. So far as Saddam Hussein's military machine is concerned, without going into the details one comment should suffice. Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly, Director of Operations at the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said "One Iraqi Army destroyed." In terms of weaponry and manpower this is far from true but Iraq as a regional power stands crippled before succumbing Saddam Hussein tried with partial success to grab some military headlines. A Sound missile attack on the Saudi town of al Khobar, just across the causeway from Bahrain, calimed the lives of 32 U.S. servicemen. The practice was to send up two Patriot missiles to intercept an incoming Scud. Apparently one of the Patriot missile launchers was under maintenance and the other could not intercept the Scud because the Iraqi missile disintegrated in the air. Its warhead fell smack in the middle of a building at 8.30 p.m. This was just one day before Saddam Hussein announced his pullout from Kuwait. Another attempt at a spectacular show was thwarted when a Silkworm missile carrying a 500-kg. warhead fired at USS Missouri was intercepted just seven seconds from target impact by a couple of Sea Dart missiles fired from a British ship nearby.<sup>2</sup>

During the Iraq-Iran war, the Economist of London had published a cartoon of President Saddam Hussein showing him seated on a donkey and facing its tail, with the caption - if I remember correctly: "A warrior in search of a cause". Kuwait is a repetition of that stupid misadventure. The professional apologists for Arafat amongst us have, in their gullibility or for less excusable reasons, persuaded themselves to believe that Saddam Hussein is inspired by nothing less than pure altruism in favour of what goes by the name "The Palestinian Cause". Nothing is farther from the truth. Saddam Hussein's absurd proposition was squashed effectively by Mr. Shevardnadze when he said: "You cannot subjugate one nation in order to liberate another." It is only the ignoramuses and the intellectually dishonest people who will even note Saddam Hussein's claim to Kuwait on the ground that once upon a time Kuwait formed a part of the 'vilayet' of Basra in the Ottoman Empire. If such a claim were valid, both Syria and Lebanon could legitimately claim Palestine on the ground that at one time or another it was part of the "'velayet' of Damascus or of Beirut in the same

empire. What then would be the status of Jerusalem which was an independent 'sanjaq' directly administered by Istanbul? How would Saddam Hussein describe the present status of Hasa which was conquered by the Ottomans in 1555 A.D. and liberated in 1916 A.D.? (Hasa was also administered from Basra and covered the entire Gulf littoral of Saudi Arabia and included what are now Qatar and Bahrain). No one amongst us seems to have asked himself the question why Saddam Hussein did what he did, and try to answer it rationally. Since none of the *casus belli* cited by him to justify the invasion and annexation of Kuwait would stand scrutiny, the real reason must lie elsewhere. It is in fact a case of vaulting ambition overleaping itself. Since the day the "Butcher from Tikrit" assassinated his way to power, he appears to have been consumed and driven by the ambition to achieve a sort of primacy in the Arab world - by force if necessary - with himself as a kind of latter-day Abbasid Caliph, conveniently clad in the raiment of whatever remains of the Michel Aflaw Aflaq version of Ba'ath socialism as developed after the latter's expulsion from Syria. To pursue such an ambition one needs enormous resources. Iraq simply did not have them. Eleven years ago, ignoring the dictum that one must never attack a revolution, he went to war against Iran - not to defeat the "Islamic Revolution" but to gain control of resources, and, incidentally also to serve a kind of notice to his very numerous Shia subjects. Since the oil shock of 1973, he had noticed the power that control over crude oil implied. Whoever possessed and controlled the largest known concentration of reserves of crude oil outside the former socialist world, would be in a position to dictate his terms to the rest of the world. There was the key to the kingdom he sought to acquire. When Saddam, Hussein attacked Iran, the Iranian armed forces were in a state of disarray, and, his calculations were based on the assumed certainty of a quick victory. Once Iran was brought to its knees and sued for peace, he would have generously offered to withdraw provided Iran ceded what used to be known at one time as "Iraq 'ajam", i.e., the oil-rich part of Khuzistan, which would have meant also complete control over the Shatt-el-Arab, thus negating the Algiers Treaty of 1975.<sup>3</sup>

As his invasion came to a grinding halt in the face of determined Iranian resistance, he was faced with two grim realities: the first was that he had failed, and the second was that his soldiers had no stomach for fighting a war that could not be easily won. The second problem he tried to overcome by offering the most fantastic incentives to the officers and the men by this had only a limited impact. With practically no air power and very little servicable armour and far fewer artillery, Iran used its fanati-

cally inspired masses to push Iraq back step by step. Iranian counter-attacks were always limited in scope and do not seem to have had the ultimate objective of occupying Iraqi territory. When Saddam Hussein finally used his chemical weapons, it was an act of desperation. His air force had done precious little to distinguish itself, and his army was no longer able to hold the Iranians back. He had to find a way out. That is why at the end it was he who was looking for a way to stop the fighting. Thus, the truth also is that the recently publicised assertions of the ability of the Iraqi army to take punishment is no more than a propaganda ploy. Had Saddam Hussein succeeded - instead of failing - it can be taken for granted that the entire southern littoral of the Gulf would have been his next objective. It is not at all certain that after his failure against Iran, he gave up his grandiose dreams. It seems clear now that he revised his plans. He must have calculated that if he could gain control over the southern littoral of the Gulf by simply sweeping aside the militarily weak and internally fragile regimes there, he would be in a much stronger position to threaten Iran again and to succeed in achieving control of the entire oil resources of the Gulf area as a whole. That would make him the undisputed master of the Arab world east of Suez, and also enable him to put effective pressure on the industrial world to serve his cause. The Third World would then kowtow to him willingly. Before he could resume the pursuit of that ultimate objective he badly needed two things; first, a successful military exploit to regain "lost face" both at home and abroad, and secondly, the means to pay off his foreign debts which were threatening to bankrupt his country. Kuwait was the obvious choice, regardless of the fact that during his stupid war against Iran, he was gratified to receive from Kuwait enormous amounts of money which Kuwait obtained by selling its own oil on Iraqi account. That he eventually "welshed" on this should cause no surprise. Figures tell the grim story of the extent of Iraq's indebtedness to the outside world, and the unbearable pressures it was generating. Contrary to the widely publicised figure of \$ 70 billion Iraq's external debt, confidentially and conservatively estimated by a specialist group constituted in Europe at the behest of the major creditors, shortly before August 2, 1990, stood at \$ 82 billion - a third of it owed to non-Arab creditors. To make matters worse, Iraq's earlier oil-money had been frittered away in the fruitless war against Iran. Thus, the painful fact on the day of invasion was that every man, woman and child in Iraq owed \$ 4824 to the outside world. Assuming that the non-Arab creditors were charging an average of 11.5 per cent interest with the principal being repayable in 10 equal annual instalments, and that the Arab creditors were charging no interest but the principal was again payable in

the same number of instalments, Iraq's annual repayment liability works out to \$ 11.1 billion without the benefit of interest being payable on reducing balance.<sup>4</sup>

Six months after the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait and subsequent passage of eleven UN resolutions granting almost a blank cheque to the USA-led anti-Saddam military coalition of over two dozen countries to push him out even by force if the economic sanctions fail, the world community is nowhere near its goal of freeing Kuwait from Iraqi jaws. Thus the biggest US problem is the same as ever - to convince Saddam that Bush means business and that he is not indulging in empty bluster despite contradictory signals. But what even if the Iraqi dictator is convinced? He will not give up Kuwait even if it means war - that is the latest from his Foreign Minister. He poses not to be scared of a threat of an Armageddon, and even leaping out of his lair to launch as offensive if the sanctions bite deep enough. All that the American desert shield, now readying for a deadly air and land offensive with a formidable array of planes and tanks, may be said to have achieved is to save the oil-rich Saudi Arabia from the fate of Kuwait. But beyond that all the huge preparations have produced only a sickening stalemate. The American dream of bombing Baghdad along with Saddam out of existence in a short sharp strike or to engineer an internal coup and catch him alive the Noreiga way, remains as unrealised as ever. Instead, Bush has been compelled to talk to the dictator for a diplomatic exit out of the dirty mess, for form's sake at least. Meanwhile, the oil crunch arising from Iraq and Kuwait is driving a number of world economies, including those of India and its neighbours, into a runaway inflation and industrial recession. War may come anytime though the US desputy commander on spot has said that his troops would not be ready for attack by January 15, the deadline set by UN for Iraq to pull out of Kuwait or face war. But that may only be a subterfuge. The generals have been asking for more and more troops if the strike has to be swift and decisive and the American and other casualties minimum. So more US troops and planes are being moved into the Gulf from various US bases. Nearly 3 lakh US troops and one lakh from other nations, including the Arabs, are already there and 1,50,000 more are to be moved in to face Saddam's estimated 5 lakh in Kuwait and southern Iraq. The new arrivals have to be acclimatised to the desert conditions and that takes time. Those already there are getting tired of waiting in inhospitable clime and lack of creature comforts. The fear of high casualties is compounded by Saddam's repeated threats. This is apart from the nightmare of Saudi oil-fields going up in flames, causing severe climatic upheavals and devastating at least half of Israel with missiles. Thus Saddam is doing everything possible to make it look a futile holocaust in which no one will be the victor. The calculated release of 4000 hostages

on Christmas eve has made the war less urgent for many western minds. There have been anti-war demonstrations in the US cities and that Congress is in no mood to endorse the war option easily. The Arab and European allies too are riven by doubts. Soviet Russia, France and China want all avenues for talks to be exhausted. Many want an Arab solution - that is a face-saving compromise that gives Saddam rights over the contiguous oil well and a couple of islands, though he goes on asserting historical claim over the whole of territory. However, what has made diplomatic parleys complicated for USA is Saddam's linking of his withdrawal from Kuwait with Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories of West Bank and Gaza strip. This has won him popular acclaim all over the Muslim world, making him a hero who dared to challenge a super power. It has divided the Arab League more than ever, and the USA has been compelled to go with the rest of the world in criticizing Israel for its handling of Palestinian uprising. It had to agree to a settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict through an international peace conference against Israeli wishes, and against its own earlier stand as it thinks the future of Israel is no less at stake. The Iraqi bluster has emboldened the Palestinian belligerence and led to flareups, such as the Temple Mount incident. All in all, a tricky situation;<sup>5</sup>

There is something perfidious about the United States and Israel professing outrage at Iraq's banditry. We all now that two wrongs do not make a right - that is not the point here anyway - but still is pretty rich when two big-time criminals complain about the world going to the dogs when they observe the work of a pickpocket, particularly when one of the former has played a major role in furthering the pickpocket's career George Bush. Vice President when Grenada was invaded and Commander-in-Chief of the armed force that invaded and currently occupies Panama, condemns the invasion of Kuwait. The administration of which he was Vice-President stands convicted by the International Court of Justice for the criminal mining of the coast of Nicaragua, and he condemns the laying of sea mines in the Persian Gulf. Israel occupies Palestine and southern Lebanon and practices apartheid by another name. It speaks of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction while assuring the world that it reserves the right to use chemical and nuclear weapons. When the U.S. said "no linkage", what it was really saying was that there would be no discussion of an international conference to discuss Palestinian independence or to discuss the weapons of mass destruction that are with Israel. As we have seen, the very mention of a future in which the Israel-Palestine issue would be solved in the statement of the European Community and in the joint statement of

Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh and its own Secretary of State was enough to make the U.S. administration cry linkage.<sup>6</sup>

A month after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, even the pliable Perez de Cuellar, while emphasising that "a sin does not justify another sin," said that he hoped for a "complete solution of Middle East problems" in order to avert such crises. He said: "I hope that what is happening now will open the eyes of those who are against attacking frontally the problem of Palestine." In the words of a recent (March 5) commentary in the New Yorker.

Saddam Hussein did not invent the grievances there, and they will not simply disappear when he is gone. In the Middle East, "linkage" is not some option to be debated. It is a simple fact. The only real question is how many more wars will have to be fought and how many lives will have to be lost before that fact is recognised.

Between August 6 and September 25, 1990 the United States pushed a series of resolutions through the United Nations Security Council, putting into effect against Iraq the toughest sanctions that had ever been imposed on a member country. They were comprehensive, and effectively shut Iraq off from even food and medicine, and were enforced by a U.S. - led air, land and sea military blockade.

There is a key problem that has to be addressed if the region is to move towards stability and peace. Throughout the Gulf crisis the United States and the coalition partners refused to accept any linkage between Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 despite several UN Resolutions seeking evacuation of occupied Arab territories. Israel could do so because of US and Western backing and the crucial role Tel Aviv played in overall Western strategy in the region. There is growing realisation even in the United States today that the issue can no more be avoided. Whatever the failures of President Saddam Hussein he has placed the Palestine question high on the international agenda and no new international order could be constructed as long as the United States and the other powers do not give up their dual standards, and the United Nations is seen to behave with the same urgency as did in the case of Kuwait. France and the Soviet Union have both called for an international conference to settle the Palestine and other outstanding issues in the region. The proposal has been supported also by China and India and the Non-aligned nations. But its solution will not be easy. Indeed, Israel is deeply divided over the issue. Its two main political parties - the hardline Likud Party which leads the ruling coalition in Jerusalem, and the opposi-

tion Labour Party - united by a desire to see Iraq comprehensively defeated have already aired sharp differences over post-war Israeli policy. Labour has urged the government to make concessions on the occupied territories in exchange for peace and security with Israel's Arab neighbours. However, Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister and the Likud leader, has reiterated his determination to retain West Bank and Gaza. He told Israeli Radio last month in an interview that his government was ready to negotiate "with the whole Arab world" but he added: "The Likud believes that there is no need, in order to achieve peace, to give up territories and parts of Israel's map." Likud MPs believe that the real challenge to Israel would come - now that the war is over - from the assumption of the United States that a settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict was the core issue in establishing a new order in the Middle East. They are confident that public opinion as a reaction to Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel and the pro-Saddam sentiment in the occupied territories will aid to consolidate the party's position. Labour on the other hand sees in the new US posture a "great opportunity" to achieve a far-reaching peace settlement. The party is, however, divided over how far go in accepting full Palestinian independence.<sup>7</sup>

Amnesty International has voiced serious concern over the "arbitrary" arrest and torture of Palestinians by armed Kuwaiti soldiers and civilians in the post-war Kuwait. The human rights organisation on March 18, 1991 called for an investigation into the alleged abuses of Palestinians in Kuwait.

It said the methods of torture included beating with canes, cables, rifles and rods as well as electric shock treatment and burning with cigarette butts. Some victims were targeted because they were suspected of collaborating it said.

The Palestinian people's right of return, or repatriation, lies at the heart of the Palestine question for reasons which relate to past history and future prospects, as well as to current realities. This right arises from the most basic facts of the Arab-Zionist conflict, i.e., centuries of the Palestinian Arab society's continuity in the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River on the one hand; and the Zionist movement's usurpation of Palestine and the expulsion of the majority of its native inhabitants on the other. Equally, the fulfilment of the Palestinian right to repatriation is a precondition for the creation of any just, democratic and viable society in that territory in the future. In this light, it is ironic-though not lacking in explanation-that the majority of plans that have been floated for resolving the Middle East conflict, especially in the post - 1967 era, gloss over the

Palestinian right of return, if not eliminating it altogether from the agenda. This practice occurs for obvious reason in plans advanced by Zionist and imperialist forces. However, it is less understandable when this right is dropped from proposals presented by those who claim to have the interests of the Palestinian people at heart, or by sectors itself. In this study, we will address three basic issues:

- (1) Why the Palestinian right of return is so central.
- (2) How this right has been approached by the Palestinians and the UN over the years, and what has blocked its implementation.
- (3) How the right of return can be exercised.<sup>8</sup>

It would seem that the right of any human being to live in his/her own home and/or country is so elementary as to render equivocation impossible and discussion superfluous. Yet today, four million Palestinians live in exile-individually and collectively deprived of this right which has human as well as national, political, legal, socioeconomic and historical dimensions. Post-1948 Palestine itself exists only by virtue of decades of the Palestinian people's struggle. The need for Palestinians to struggle for repatriation is predicated on the nature of Zionism which aims not only to colonize the land, but also to replace the Palestinian Arabs. Even prior to the creation of the State of Israel, this threat lay implicit in the Zionist organized Jewish immigration to Palestine and was expressed in Histadrut slogans such as "Jewish labour only" and "Jewish products only." With the adoption of the UN partition plan of November 29, 1947, the threat became physical. Contrary to the Zionist myth that the 1948 war erupted when the Arab armies entered Palestine in May 1948, Zionist military operations to conquer the land and expell its rightful owners began soon after this resolution was adopted. Four hundred thousand Palestinians had been driven from their homes before May 14, 1948, while another 350,000 had been displaced by the time armistice agreements were reached with the neighbouring Arab states in 1949; hence the 750,000 original Palestinian refugees. During and immediately following the war, over 400 Palestinian villages were wiped off the map, while thousands more civilians were evicted from the demilitarized zones and other areas. A set of laws was passed allowing the state to confiscate the land of "absentees" who were defined as anyone who was "in any place other than his habitual residence on or after November 29, 1947." Besides covering Palestinians who were expelled by the Zionist military forces or who might have been travelling at the time, this definition was applied to 30,000 Palestinians who fled their homes at the onset of the violence, but never left the country. This created a category of "present absentees" or internal refugees, dispossessed dis-



possessed in their own country. UN estimates at the time put the value of Palestinian property taken over by Israel at 120 billion British pounds; Arab League estimates are ten times higher. Regardless of varying figures, most researchers agree that the new state of Israel would hardly have been viable without the assets thus acquired. Thus, economic interest, as well as racist ideology and the quest for power, determined that Israel would evolve on the basis of denying the Palestinian right of repatriation. Conversely, these historical facts mean that the right of return is an integral element of the decolonization process which has been occurring all over the world for decades, but has yet to restore the birth-right of the colonized peoples of South Africa and Palestine. The fact that Palestine as such was usurped, colonized and transformed into Israel means that exercising the Palestinian right of return acquired a state-building dimension in order to create a framework for decolonization. In this sense, the right of return is inseparably linked with the right of self-determination and statehood. Failure to deal with these rights as a trio has previously shown the inherent weakness and illogic of such separation. For example, the creation of an Arab state in Mandate Palestine was stipulated by the partition resolution of 1947, but the Palestinian right to statehood was swept away by the Zionist military offensive. This occurred not only due to the Zionist forces' military superiority, but was also rooted in the imperialist powers' support of the Zionist project and their concurrent lack of concern - at best for the rights and interests of the Palestinian Arabs. The partition resolution formally adopted the idea of an Arab state, but this was divorced from its necessary complement: self-determination. No popular referendum was held in Mandate Palestine where the Arab citizens constituted two-thirds of the inhabitants, and owned 90 per cent of the land, even after decades of Zionist-organized Jewish immigration and settlement. Nonetheless, 56 per cent of Palestine's most fertile land was assigned to the Jewish state projected by the partition resolution. Of course, the point here is not to quibble over per-centages of territory or population, but to stress that the Palestine issue must be addressed comprehensively. The Zionist movement adopted a comprehensive approach, "resolving" the issue by brute force, occupying 75 per cent of Palestine in 1948, and the rest in 1967. Redressing this injustice requires the Palestinian people's total involvement in a national liberation struggle which links the quest for the rights of return, self-determination and statehood, with a democratic alternative for Israeli Jews who want to share in building an egalitarian society. UN resolution 181 (the partition plan) can serve as a point of departure and legal basis in the quest for a democratic Palestine, but it must be linked with

the other inalienable Palestinian rights which have been also recognized by the UN over the years, as in the PLO's peace initiative of November 1988. The tendency of some to play down the right of return in the context of this initiative is both shortsighted and fundamentally flawed. Since Zionism dispersed and dispossessed the majority of Palestinians, the right of self-determination and statehood will always be severely curtailed until exercised in the context of repatriation. Of the four million displaced Palestinians today, 2.5 million are registered as refugees by UNRWA - a population segment that roughly corresponds to the camp dwellers in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip; another 1.5 million are unregistered refugees. It is often assumed that the right of return concerns chiefly Palestinians in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and other places of exile abroad. Such a view not only negates the unity of the Palestinian and their cause; it also overlooks the present reality and needs virtually every Palestinian community. Today, three-quarters of the Gaza Strip's population is refugees displaced from 1948 occupied Palestine. The same applies to over half the West Bank Palestinians. Even if we were to put aside these people's national and political aspirations, it is unrealistic to imagine eradicating the poverty, overcrowding and exploitation they face in the absence of their right to live where they want and have access to the resources of their own country. The latter are what the right of return would mean in the socio-economic sphere, and this is the key to social justice and the rational use of resources such as land and water. In fact, the masses of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have not dropped the right of return as is sometimes projected by those promoting partial solutions. Most recently, this right has been referred to in almost all the calls issued by the United National Leadership of the Uprising. Call No. 29 of November 20, 1988, was entitled "The Call of Repatriation" as was no. 56, issued in May 1990, marking the anniversary of Zionism's usurpation of Palestine - an occasion always marked by general strikes and protests against occupation.<sup>9</sup>

The centrality of the right of return is not outdated, but has become more poignant under the combined impact of the intifada and the current Israel or reality wherein "transfer" of Palestinians still in their homeland, and the massive influx of new Jewish immigrants, are pervading characteristics. Maha Nassar, director of the Union of Women's Committees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, described the effects of Soviet Jewish immigration to occupied Palestine as: "Making the question of the Palestinian return an impossible issue in the context of the current demographic distribution we, as Palestinian people in occupied Palestine, find the condition of immigrants settlement being banned from only the West Bank and



Gaza a hoax considering the above points (unemployment and expulsion of Palestinian workers, confiscation of water resources, repression against the intifada), also in terms of our natural growth as a people inside the green line and which is now the target for the confiscation of land, deportation and expulsion" (Return No.4). The right of return has distinct relevance for Palestinians living in the Zionist state, in so much as this right is correctly understood as a part of the decolonization process. Palestinian sociologist Elia Zureik has applied the concept of internal colonization, previously derived from the South African and US social formations, to the case of Palestinians in Israel. In socio-economic terms, the transformation of Palestine into Israel can be described as "superimposing a capitalist economy (originally under foreign control) upon a traditional peasant order" where communal land ownership and subsistence economy had pre-dominated. Thus the normal development of society in Palestine was not only distorted, but aborted; Palestinians remaining in their homeland became not only stateless or at best third class citizens of an alien state, but were primarily reduced to a reserve labour force. The situation of West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians after the 1967 occupation has not been fundamentally different in this respect. On a par with the masses of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the right of return for Palestinians in Israel entails equal access to the resources of their homeland. It means a return to an integral society, the chance to build a democratic system of government and to choose a path of economic development that encourages social justice. This obviously entails de-Zionization, dismantling discriminatory political and social structures, in short decolonization. Even before overt national-political manifestations by Palestinians in the Zionist state, such as the first Day of the Land in 1976, the Zionist authorities had been actually aware that right below the surface of Israel lies Palestine. The original Israeli national insurance law provided extra financial support to families for each child they had. Palestinians who paid taxes and insurance as part of this plan were found to be benefitting comparatively more than Jewish citizens, by virtue of having larger families. Thus, whether consciously or not, Palestinians had begun the demographic battle simply by having children. Though population growth in itself has not restored any of their rights, it has symbolized a kind of "return" at least to visibility within their denied homeland. In the case of the insurance law, the Israelis simply changed it so that child support was linked to the benefits accorded to those who have served in the army, "legally" excluding Arabs who are not drafted.<sup>10</sup>

An equally instinctive "return was staged by Palestinians in the sixties when increasing numbers of Israeli Jews migrated to urban areas seeking better paid jobs rather than working in agricultural settlements. At the same time, they leased their land to Palestinians who cultivated it in return for a portion of the crops. This led Palestinian families to remigrate and live in tents or shelters near the leased land which in some cases had been their own. The minister of agriculture estimated in the mid-seventies that 10,000 dunums had been leased in this way. New laws were passed, imposing fines on Israeli settlements that leased their land to preempt the Palestinian back-to-the-land movement. Article 13 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." Palestinians' attempts to return to their homes began before the 1948 war ended. The great majority who filed their town or village had not left the country, but simply evacuated from areas where the Zionist forces were on the offensive, to take temporary refuge in a safer area. As pointed out by Israeli historian Simha Flapan, many Jews did the same. From this time, the right of return was applied to Jews by the Israeli state, but not to Palestinian Arabs.

For those expelled from the country altogether, closed and closely guarded Israeli borders signalled that return was not imminent, but this desire hardened into resolve and increasing consciousness of the political implications of their plight. As was made clear in an April 1949 petition for return by Jaffa notables exiled to Lebanon, there could be no solution to the conflict without the repatriation of the expelled (Journal of Palestine Studies 71, document section). As part of UNRWA's 1956-1957 report, the director told the UN General Assembly: "...the great mass of the refugees continues to believe that a grave injustice has been done to them and to express a desire to return to their homeland."<sup>11</sup>

This desire was expressed in action as well as in daily life. In the early fifties, camp dwellers in the Gaza Strip uprooted the first trees planted there by UNRWA; they considered it a waste of money as they did not plan to stick around to see the seedlings grow. Up until the mid-fifties, most refugees insisted on maintaining their tents, despite the hardships entailed, because these were an outward sign that they intended to return to their real homes. In the Strip, West Bank and Jordan, there were recurring demonstrations against resettlement plans drafted by UNRWA, the US and other Western powers. In a conversation with Democratic Palestine, an exiled Gaza activist recounted a number of ways in which belief in return had moulded social customs and every-day life in the refugee camps in the Strip. His own family's house remains bare of all but necessities, as his

parents never considered it their real home despite raising their six children there, half of whom are involved in the Palestinian resistance today. The initial arrangement of the camps sprang up in patterns corresponding to pre-1948 Palestine, with refugees from the same town or village grouping together in the same block or subdivision named after their place of origin. Still today, neighbourhoods bear these names. In Shati camp, for example you will find Asdud, Jaffa, Herbia, Yibna, Majdal etc. Babies were often named after the family's home village or town. When asked where they are from, children invariably answer with the family's place of origin, despite having been born in a refugee camp. Women continue to make and wear dresses with the embroidery pattern peculiar their own village, while songs referring to the home village are sung at weddings and other occasions. He recalled a song celebrating that Asdud, where he is from, gained the status of a city under the British Mandate. Then, laughing, he related how when he was a child he and the others hated the rain. But his parents, who bore the trouble of patching the roof with every downpour, rejoiced because it meant that their land in Asdud was doing well. When he grew older, he realized the implication of this. His parents were so attached to their land that its state of being was a much more abiding phenomenon for them than the fact that Israeli settlers were currently reaping its benefits. When arranging the marriages of their sons and daughters, refugee families kept the prospects of returning home in mind, preferring couples to be from the same village for the sake of keeping the family and landholdings together. In the fifties, dowries often included land titles from 1948-occupied land as well as money. Property deeds from occupied Palestine were carefully preserved and considered more precious than gold. At the same time, many refused to buy land in the Strip even when prices were low.<sup>12</sup>

Similar phenomena are to be found in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the West Bank as well. In addition, the implicit dilemma in the nature of the camp has continued over the years. On the one hand, it would be reasonable to improve conditions in order to ease people's hardships, eliminate disease and dirt, and provide a better life for children; they are, after all, the new generation which must struggle for return - a fact that became more prominent with the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement in the late sixties when the camp youth were the first to sign up. On the other hand, structural improvement of the camps was not always welcome because it hinted at resettlement - the negation of repatriation. In fact, there's no real solution to this friction, except by deciding on a case-by-case basis that will benefit the struggle for return. In practice, the dilemma has been dealt with in different ways at different periods and

places in accordance with the attitude of the respective governing authorities where the camps are situated, the presence or banning of the Palestinian organizations, the economic situation of the camp residents and other factors. What is certain is that the camps remain as a symbol of the will to return. As a camp dweller and UNRWA employee told the authors of *Stateless in Gaza*: "We will not leave the camps. The next move can only be back to Palestine. It is a question of life and death - survival on our land." The first wave of physical return after 1948 was based on individual initiative and occurred almost instinctively as people struggled to survive in the wake of upheaval. The returnees were most often peasants trying to salvage their possessions and stored food supplies, harvest their crops or visit relatives who had managed to remain back home. There were also a few raids on Zionist settlements in those early years, but these were the exception rather than the rule. Those discovered crossing the borders were dubbed "infiltrators" by the Israeli authorities and the press, parallel to the organized freedom fighters of later on. They were also routinely shot by the Israeli army. The *New York Times* of January 2, 1953, reported that in previous year, 394 such "infiltrators" had been killed, 227 wounded and 2,595 captured. Despite these harsh measures, some exiled Palestinians became legendary for succeeding in successive "returns." One such person is Abu Saleh who now lives in Ain Al Hilweh camp near Sidon. Exiled from Palestine in 1948, Abu Saleh recurrently crossed the Zionist lines up until 1967, returning to see his wife and family in Deir Al Assad. Several of his children were born after 1948, and the occupation forces constantly harassed his wife, trying to catch him; especially when they could see a new child on the way, they refused to believe her when she said he was not there. Abu Saleh's life, like other revolutionaries of his generation, is a chronicle of struggle to stay on the land and return to it. He fought in the 1936-39 revolt against British colonialism; he was among the small Palestinian forces who resisted the Zionist usurpation campaign in 1948; having joined the PFLP, he fought in the Black September 1970 battles to protect the Palestinian revolution's presence in Jordan, as the best base for launching the struggle for return in 1982; he participated in the resistance to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and was imprisoned in Ansar. By the mid-fifties, the quest for return began to assume the form of organized guerrilla operations, especially across the armistice lines from the Gaza Strip, then under Egyptian administration. Nasser's government adopted this policy based on the refugees' hardened resolve to return. In 1954, militant mass demonstrations rocked the Strip for two days after the Palestinians discovered a plan to resettle them in the Sinai. The 1948 expulsion had nearly tripled the population of the Strip, and the people were adamant that any move must be back to their homes. The demonstrators also cried out for

arms to fight for this right - a cry that would increase with the recurring Israeli raids on the Strip, culminating in its four-month occupation in 1956 in conjunction with the Israeli-British-French war on Egypt. Even prior to the war, Nasser had created a small Palestinian battalion in Gaza. After the Israeli withdrawal, the Gazans' unanimous wish to return to Egyptian rather than UN administration attests to their desire to battle for return in the context of the rising Arab national liberation movement headed by Nasser (Statless in Gaza). From the beginning, there were international efforts focussed on the question of return. Count Folke Bernadotte, sent to Palestine as a UN mediator in summer 1948, submitted a report to the General Assembly which *inter alia* stressed this right: "...no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the right of the Arab refugee to return to the home from which he has been dislodged by the hazards and strategy of the armed conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine.....It would be an offensive against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and, indeed, at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries." September 17th, the day after he submitted his report, Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem by LEHI terrorists headed by today's Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir. Thus, the Zionists struck their first blow against UN enforcement of the right of return, though the General Assembly on December 11, 1948, adopted resolution 194, stipulating the immediate return; this principle was reaffirmed annually until 1967 when Israel opposed by creating a whole new wave of refugees - Syrians and Egyptians as well as more Palestinians. The Israeli invasion and occupation of the rest of Palestine, the Golan Heights and Sinai was a result of its expansionist aspirations; by pushing back the borders, the Zionist state also pushed many 1948 refugees further away from their homes. The 1967 war uprooted 145,000 UNRWA-registered refugees for the second time in less than two decades; these constituted somewhat less than half of all the displaced in this war. Again, like in 1948, under the impact of Zionist aggression, families fled their homes. Again, especially in the West Bank, they tried to return to their villages immediately, but were blocked by Israeli troops. In many cases, they were rounded up onto trucks, driven to the Jordan River and expelled. Others made it to their villages only to witness their houses being destroyed. In September 1967, Peter Dodd and Halim Barakat headed a team of researchers who interviewed refugees in tent camps in Jordan. The story they recorded of a family from Beit Noba, Latrun district, is typical of the fate of many. The family left their house

hurriedly after hearing artillery, taking only two blankets and no food; the mother was barefooted.

Two days later, upon returning to Beit Noba, "they saw their homes being demolished. Red soil was put over the place where houses had been." They said, just like a dream. It's as if we've never been there' (River Without Bridges).<sup>13</sup>

Immediately after the war, the UN Security Council and General Assembly issued resolutions for the return of the refugees from the recent fighting. This time, Israel announced that it would comply. That this was only a tactical gesture, designed to ward off international pressure, became clear in practice. In July, 175,000 Palestinians filed out applications for return, which were submitted to the Israeli government via the Red Cross. In August, only 14,000 were readmitted to Palestine before Israel stopped the process. Even in the short time this mini-return was going on, Israel ensured that the procedure went at a snail's pace. The Red Cross estimated that three times the number of returnees could have been processed in the same period. Two British MPs, Ian Gilmour and Dennis Walters, who visited Amman and Jerusalem, subsequently wrote the following in the London Times of July 27, 1967: "Most people in Britain probably believe that Israel has agreed to their (the refugees) return and that repatriation is now satisfactorily proceeding. Nothing could be farther from the truth."

The 1967 Israeli aggression did not, however, extinguish the Palestinian will to return. On the contrary, by increasing the number of Palestinians expelled and living under occupation, it prodded the upsurge of the Palestinian national movement; the armed resistance organizations formed from 1965 onwards developed dramatically in the post-1967 period, and the battle for return was waged on the basis of guerrilla warfare strategy. A strong motivating factor for this growth was the refugees' desire for return.

In River Without Bridges, Dodd and Barakat relate in the preface: "We have been able to visit our respondents several times since September 1967. In December of that year, torrential rains forced the evacuation of Camp Zeezya. All its residents were moved to the valley of the River Jordan.....The new sites, however, were close to the cease-fire lines separating the armies of Israel and Jordan. Artillery duels were frequent, and the refugee camps became the target of Israeli artillery fire. In early February, when we visited the Zeezya refugees, we found them accustomed to artillery fire. They were proud of living in the midst of the battle. In Camp Zeezya they had felt isolated, hopelessly removed from their homes. In the valley of the Jordan, they had witnessed the beginnings of

guerrilla attacks on the enemy. Their spirits were raised. They knew the resistance fighters personally, and they admired them. "On February 23, 1968, Israeli air and ground forces attacked the refugee camp at Karameh. This attack forced the total evacuation of all refugees from the Jordan valley. Once again the Zeezya families moved. This time, they returned to Camp Zeezya, on the wind-swept plateau. In July of this year, we visited them there and found the hope of return still uppermost in their minds." The survey conducted among this sample of the 1967 refugees revealed that 75 per cent of them definitely wishes to return; of the 18 per cent whose wish to return was conditional, the condition most often mentioned was the end of the Israeli occupation. Among the seven per cent who did not want to return, some mentioned that their known involvement in the resistance would mean immediate arrest. However, one of the 75 per cent said: "We want to return very much even if we have to sneak in and die there."<sup>14</sup>

The denial of the rights of the Palestinian people, and the raising of Kuwait to the status of an autonomous nation, are linked in the Arab political consciousness, as ramifications of the Pax Anglo-Americana. Saddam Hussein's advocacy of the right of the Palestinian people has been derided as a pathetic effort to distract attention from his aggression against a neighbouring state. Aggression and annexation were the only designs he had, or so this argument runs - the advocacy of Palestinian rights was only an afterthought.

From the viewpoint, it is easy to forget that the annexation of Kuwait was itself an afterthought. There had, in fact, been some signs of an Iraqi withdrawal shortly after the invasion. But the Western military build-up in Saudi Arabia prompted a reversal of position, and raising of the stakes<sup>15</sup>. Saddam Hussein's later announcement of the 'linkage' asserted very simply, that the Pax Anglo-Americana in Kuwait would be respected, provided its greatest abuse - the plight of Palestinians - was redressed. It at once captured the Arab political imagination. For the first time since Palestine was lost to the Anglo-Zionist conspiracy, here was an Arab leader who had actually taken the military high ground and was seeking to force the West to come to a political bargain. It was heady stuff for the Arabs, who have for decades been dealing with the West from a position of weakness.

Largely because of the abject loyalty of the 'emirs of oil', the West has deluded itself into believing that memories of colonial manipulation are short and transient. But the asymmetry between the Western positions on resolutions 242 (1967) and 660 (1990) is only the latest of many signals that the Arab world has learnt through bitter experience to recognise. They have not forgotten yet how Palestine was partitioned in 1948, and how they

were driven out of their lands by the Haganah and the terrorist gangs of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. They well remember how the UN mediator, Count Bernadotte, demanded a revision of the partition plan and the return of the Palestinian refugees to their land, was murdered by Zionist thugs, with no more than a few murmurs of protest by the UN.

Memories of struggle against the West are deeply imbedded in the political consciousness of the Arab people. And much of this struggle has been in the cause of Palestine. It is ironic that the current assault on Iraq should come in the 50th anniversary year of the last, and that the US-led axis should today identify itself, in a conscious evocation of World War-II, as the 'allies'. In 1941, Iraq had risen in revolt against virtually the same line-up of 'allies'. And the factor that had precipitated the rising was the continuing Jewish colonisation of Palestine, under the benign guardianship of Britain.<sup>16</sup>

In an interview with Saeed Naqvi telecast over the national channel on February 2, 1991, Hassan Ibn Talal, Crown Prince of Jordan, spoke of the unavailing efforts may be made by his country to be get the western powers to refrain from building up their forces in the Gulf region, so that the Iraqi military could withdraw from Kuwait in accordance with a commitment that they had given in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. It is curious that these points have either been suppressed or been very shoddily covered by the West-dominated news agencies and media. The James Baker-Tariq Aziz meeting at Geneva on January 9, went on for six hours. Yet few newsoapers or agencies thought it worthwhile to report what the bargaining positions had been on either side. Similarly, the UN secretary-general, Perez de Cuellar's meeting with Saddam Hussein has gone largely unreported on the substantive issues. And Indian news agency managed to get a copy of the confidential report of the secretary-general, which indicated a greater willingness to compromise on the part of the Iraqi president than he has been credited with. (See the Press Trust of India's New York datelined story: "Saddam had offered to talk it out", The Hindu, January 23, 1991 p.6; and 'Saddam was willing to discuss package deal', The Statesman January 23, 1991, p.9.

In the event, the uprising was crushed by the British Indian Army. But it succeeded in adding another potent weapon to the Western ideological armoury. The chief instigator of the rising was Haj Amin al-Hussaini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who was later to meet - and win a commitment of support from - the German Fuehrer at a private audience on November 28, 1941.<sup>17</sup> The Arabs are therefore, easily portrayed as the natural legatees of the Nazi programme of extermination against the Jews.

For Indians, who have learnt to look at Subash Chandra Bose's Nazi links with greater understanding than embarrassment, this case must seem rather over-stated. Bose's Nazi connections represent a major moral dilemma, but do not diminish greatly from his standing as a nationalist figure. The boot, if anything, is on the other foot. There are objective and identifiable reasons why Bose's characterisation of the British as 'super-Nazis' struck a responsive chord amongst the subject populations of 'His Majesty's colonies'. Haj Amin's Nazi links, similarly, could easily be turned around to read as a damning indictment of British colonial policy. Whatever be the historical judgments from the vantage point of today, the contemporary view then was that British liberalism and German fascism were different only in degree, and not in kind; that capitalism could sustain the liberal ideological facade only when given the kind of elbow-space that Britain's vast colonial possessions afforded her; and that when constricted within narrow territorial boundaries, as with post-World War I Germany, liberalism is all too apt to lapse into the kind of revanchist nationalism that the Nazis represented.<sup>18</sup>

Iraq, criticising Washington's Middle-East policies, vowed on March 11, 1991 never to abandon its quest for a settlement to the Palestinian issue and said the Gulf war brought the 43-year old question to the international lime-light.

Iraq, routed by forces of an alliance led by the United States, had been trying to link long-running Middle-East issues such as the Palestinian question to the Gulf crisis, sparked by its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

The US Secretary of State, James Baker, stressed to the Israeli leadership on March 12, 1991 that intense hard work was needed to maintain stability and prosperity in the Middle-East region after the devastating Gulf war.

James Baker met the Israeli Foreign Minister and also senior Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

The Israeli Foreign Minister described his talks with the US Secretary of State as encouraging signs from the United States, but he said more detailed talks were needed to be held between the two countries. The Israeli Minister added a new Arab attitude towards Israel also seemed to be emerging.

James Baker said the United States was ready to do its share of work in rebuilding the Middle-East region. He said he had not come to Israel to put pressure but instead to cajole and plead with the people there.

Reacting to the Israeli Cabinet's decision to hold elections in the occupied territories according to their 1989 resolution, he said he was

happy at the new development. He, however, stressed on the United States' stand of not holding any talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. He said the United States' was satisfied with the Israeli decision which ruled out complete independence of the Palestinians in Israel and excluded contact with the PLO.

According to US officials in M Nicosia Secretary James Baker's decision to meet Palestinians was not a return to talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The 12 Palestinians who met Baker in Israel were handpicked by the US Consulate in Israel and were representatives of the Palestine population there, "representing certain strains of political and social thinking" among the Palestinians in occupied territories.

Even though some of the representatives had been endorsed by the PLO, the US Secretary was not meeting with the representatives "because they were PLO representatives", Bush Administration officials clarified. The meeting convened over the weekend, however, did reflect a change of plans.

Nearly three weeks after US-led coalition forces liberated Kuwait, dozens of Palestinians are disappearing into a secret web of interrogation, torture, detention, deportation and in a few cases death.

Many Kuwaitis accuse Palestinians of collaborating with the Iraqi Army during its seven-month occupation of Kuwait. In an atmosphere of virtual gun law, some are now taking organised or random revenge.

Palestinians are picked up at checkpoints manned by the Kuwaiti Army and resistance or taken from hospitals and homes, human rights workers say. Some are taken to police stations, others to schools converted into interrogation centres.

After an ordeal of hours, days or weeks, some have been shot dead and buried in unmarked graves, according to Arab medical workers and gravediggers who say they saw the bodies.

Kuwaiti Ministers and Army officers say they are aware individual acts of revenge are taking place but they deny there is any systematic campaign of abuses.

"I don't think purposely organised torture by the Government is taking place at all," AbdulRahman al-Awadi, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, told reporters. "But I won't be surprised if there is some hard handling for personal reasons."

He said the Government was trying to re-establish the rule of law and planned to bring accused collaborators to trial.

While expressing anger at the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which backed Iraq in the Gulf war, Ministers insist they do not sanction reprisals against Palestinians in Kuwait - about 170,000 remaining from a total of some 400,000 before Iraqi invasion in last August.

At Al-Riqqa cemetery in a southern Kuwait city suburb, the register shows at least 80 unidentified bodies have been buried since Iraqi forces were expelled from Kuwait.

Most had been shot in the head at close range, a gravedigger said. Some bore signs of torture, with finger-nails missing, faces disfigured and burnmarks on the body.

While many may have been killed by the Iraqis, some had died since the liberation, the gravedigger said. Most recently, 12 unidentified men aged between 15 and 30, most bearing signs of torture, were buried in a mass grave at Al-Riqqa on March 17, 1991.

At another cemetery, in the Sulaibikhat district, the Kuwaiti director said families had come looking for missing relatives but he denied any Palestinians had been brought for burial.

However, an employee followed me to my car and volunteered that a young Palestinian shot in the head had been buried there last Thursday. "We are afraid to speak," he whispered before slipping away.

A medical worker at the Big Mubarak al Kabeer hospital in the mainly Palestinian Hawalli district said he saw police deliver the body of another Palestinian to the casualty ward on Sunday with two bullets through the head.

A western human rights worker said he saw the bodies of two other Palestinians shot at point blank range, still lying where they had been killed in the street.

A senior Palestinian who was arrested by soldiers and held for 12 days told Reuters he shared cells with at least 60 Palestinians and a few Iraqi civilians in three different detention centres.

He said most had been severely beaten and had broken noses, facial cuts, bruises and cigarette burns on their bodies. Some had been shot in the legs and could not walk.

Although blind-folded while being moved, he said he believed he was held first in a police station basement, then in a school and finally in a military prison on the outskirts of Kuwait city, from which he was freed last week.

On his first night in detention, a guard sprayed machinegun fire in his cell, grazing his head, said the Palestinian, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals.

"The majority of Palestinians are just waiting to get their money out of the bank and leave," he said. "We built and modernised this country. It was a desert when we came here."

Some detainees are apparently being held and treated inside hospitals.

Soldiers have sealed off the orthopaedic ward of Mubarak al Kabeer hospital. Witnesses said soldiers kept wounded detainees in war 18 of the Farwaniyah hospital until the international committee of the Red Cross inspected the clinic on Sunday.

Many Palestinian doctors and nurses have been suspended from work. At least seven doctors are missing and presumed in detention.

A medico at Mubarak al Kabeer hospital summed up the sense of hopelessness in the Palestinian community. "I can cope with the pain of being beaten, the hard part is being humiliated without guilt, just because of our nationality", he said.

Standing Marooned in the no-man's-land between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti borders the young Kuwaiti-born Palestinian refugee was having difficulty finding his place in the new world order. In more ways than he cared to count, the Gulf war had not been good either for him or for the cause of his fellow Palestinians. After surviving six months of the Iraqi occupation, he was one of thousands of young men arrested in Kuwait and taken to Iraq as hostages in the days before the Iraqis withdrew their forces. He then spent three weeks in Basra's al-Haritha jail, where his daily food ration was one bowl of rice and a single bread roll filled with stones. The appalling sanitary conditions, combined with the constant screams of prisoners being tortured and beaten, made it difficult for him to sleep at night. Unexpectedly, he gained his freedom when a crowd of Iraqi demonstrators stormed the jail and set the prisoners free. Anxious to escape the bloodbath unfolding in Basra, he set off on foot for his home in Kuwait. It was only when he arrived at the Kuwaiti border that the real-politik of the post-war Gulf dawned on him. Despite having with him his Jordanian passport and his Kuwaiti work permit, the Kuwaiti army officers controlling the liberated border refused him entry.<sup>19</sup>

"They told me to go back to Jordan," said the Palestinian, a 25-year-old computer programmer who was born in Kuwait and has never been to Jordan. "They told me the Palestinians were in trouble, and that they had



enough trouble for the moment. They told me to go away or they would shoot me."

And so the Palestinian found himself in a quandary as he sat by the corrugated iron shelter he had built in the desert a few hundred yards from "Checkpoint Freedom", the farthest point maintained by the American forces southern Iraq. Living off pre-packed US Army rations called MREs, which stands for "meals ready to eat" but better known by GIs as "meals rejected by Ethiopians", the Palestinian and scores of other refugees caught in no-man's-land by the conclusion of the war were biding their time, hoping their predicament would be resolved by the International Red Cross.

For all the attention Saddam Hussein focused on the Palestinian issue during his attempts to justify the invasion of Kuwait, there is now little interest in Palestinians to be found in Basra and the surrounding Iraqi towns as the Arab Ba'athist Socialist Party regime struggles to survive. If the reports now emanating from the Basra area are true, then the allies, hope that moderate Islamic fundamentalists had taken the first, significant steps towards dismantling Saddam's Ba'athist edifice seem to be premature. Although bloody clashes are still continuing in some of the outlying towns where the disorganisation inflicted on the Republican Guard by the allied victory meant the authorities were slow in reacting to the dissent, Basra is once more under Saddam's Hussein's control. The Republican Guard is much better at killing Iraqis, as their assault of the Kurds in 1988 proved, than killing non-Iraqis. To the failure of the Iraqi armed forces to achieve any significant victory against Iran during eight years of warfare should now be added the rout at the hands of the allies. However, much the allies would like to see Saddam removed, the idea that an Islamic, Shia government based in Basra would form a counterbalance to Saddam's secular, Sunni Muslim stronghold in Baghdad - a concept which, apparently, last week attracted a fair measure of support in some allied circles - is fraught with danger. Given Saddam's conduct over the past 12 months, it is tempting to believe that any change of government would be preferable to the survival of his regime. But there are very good reasons why the allies, whose forward most positions are within 30 miles of the outskirts of Basra, are not rushing to provide Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim, head of the Iranian-based "Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq", with weapons to assist his anti-Saddam revolt.<sup>20</sup>

In the days, not so long ago, that the West considered it preferable to support Iraq at Iran's expense, much energy was spent opposing a terrorist group called al-Dawa, Shia-Muslim Iraqi fanatics based around Basra.

They specialised in blowing up American and French diplomatic institutions and trying to assassinate the Kuwaiti royal family, well known for their disdain for radical Shia politics. Al-Dawa's spiritual leader was one Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim. It was in response to the imprisonment of 17 al-Dawa terrorists in Kuwait in 1984 that Shi'ite terrorists in Lebanon began kidnapping Westerners in Beirut, including John McCarthy and Terry Waite, as bargaining chips for the terrorists' release. But the Kuwaitis, backed by Washington, consistently refused to release the "Dawa 17," as they became known, and it was not until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait last August, when the guards abandoned Kuwait's central prison in panic, that the Dawa 17 were freed.

Had Saddam captured the Dawa 17 he would undoubtedly have had them executed, an act which would have had potentially tragic consequences for the remaining Western hostages still held in Lebanon. Whether the freed terrorists are now in the vanguard of the attempts to overthrow the Ba'athists in Basra is hard to tell, but the fact that Iraq's Islamic resistance is calling itself Dawa should be a warning to the West to leave Iraq to its own destiny. If Iraq is likely to be too preoccupied in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf war to have much interest in the fate of the Palestinians, the same cannot be said of Kuwait, where the initial euphoria of liberation has been tainted by the desire of many Kuwaitis to avenge their suffering on the Palestinian community. Some Palestinians did assist the Iraqis in the early days of the invasion as much out of resentment of the Kuwaitis' oil wealth as for ideological reasons such as those put forward by the Marxist Palestinians leader, George Habash. He has argued forcefully in favour of overthrowing the neo-colonialist monarchies of the Gulf. Ironically, these arguments are now attracting sympathisers among Kuwaitis who survived the occupation and are less than pleased with the cavalier behaviour of some members of the Kuwaiti royal family. Many Kuwaitis are less than impressed by the fact that after seven months' exile at the Saudi mountain resort of Taif, the Kuwaiti government has not been able to organise even adequate food supplies since Crown Prince Saad's belated return last week. While the reclusive Emir seemed reluctant to return to a country in whose defence many young Kuwaitis suffered horrific deaths, the Crown Prince's vague assurances that the national assembly, which was dissolved in 1986, would be restored and elections held led many Kuwaitis to conclude that the country might be better served if the constitution was redrafted and the al-Sababs became a constitutional monarchy. Not that any of this is in any way affecting the victory celebrations of the allied troops. Since the liberation 10 days ago, the small groups of allied troops allowed into Kuwait City have been having a ball, feted by



grateful Kuwaitis and festooned with flags and flowers. American pilots have taken to perfecting their victory rolls over Kuwait Bay. If the commanders have any sense, however, they will see to it that the troops do not overstay their welcome. The Gulf war was always going to inflame, rather than placate, passions in the Middle East, and the potential for calamity which now exists on either side of "Checkpoint Freedom" is a strong argument in favour of allied troops returning home. Whether the new world order they aimed to bring about will find a place for refugees stuck in the desert no-man's-land is another matter.<sup>21</sup>

Nowhere has the military rout and political humiliation of Iraq been viewed with greater consternation than, perhaps, by the half Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During the seven months of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the Palestinians somehow nurtured the hope that Saddam Hussein would be able to stave off the challenge posed by the coalition ranged against him and emerge from the crisis with his reputation more or less intact. But now all these hopes have come to naught. There were five factors that prompted the Palestinians to pursue a pro-Iraqi stand during the crisis. First, it was a reflection of their frustration with the West in general and the United States in particular for the lack of momentum on the question of securing an Israeli withdrawal from the territories it captured during the June 1967 war. Second, the political depravity which they have experienced for the past two-and-a-half decades has bred a certain emotion in them to actively back powerful Arab personalities. Saddam, who defiantly stood up to the West, was the strong man they could psychologically identify with. Third, the support for Saddam could be attributed to what they regarded was the absence of real enthusiasm of the Gulf sheikhdoms in promoting the need for a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. Fourth, it was a reaction to what the Palestinians perceived was the discriminatory manner in which some of their brethren were treated by the Kuwaiti government. The Palestinians, it should be remembered, constitute the second largest community in Kuwait. Fifth, and most important, Saddam explicitly and repeatedly sought to draw a direct linkage between the Kuwait issue and the larger Middle East question. The Palestinians therefore concluded that Saddam's success was intimately bound up with their own. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) speaks for the overwhelming number of inhabitants in the West Bank and Gaza. It was thus not surprising that the pro-Iraqi sentiments of the Palestinians in the occupied territories became the policy of the PLO.<sup>22</sup>

There are several reasons why it was unwise on the part of the Palestinians to adopt a stance which favoured the Iraqis - something which has been borne out by events. For one, Saddam's advocacy of the concept of

linkage was not based on any abiding and selfless love for the Palestinians. It was solely motivated by the political calculation of trying and building up support at the grass-roots level in the Arab world for the Iraqi position, and thereby weakening the cohesion of the allied coalition, especially the Arab component of the alliance. The Palestinians, in a bid to extract political mileage for themselves, ignored this essential point. The indigenous population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who have long suffered at the hands of the Israelis, obviously know what it is to be politically subjective. But by pursuing the double standard of speaking about their own distress and not identifying with the suffering of the Kuwaitis - who are after all fellow Arabs - the Palestinians have not done their image any good.

The PLO should have known better than to have adopted a policy which was at sharp variance with that followed by the Gulf sheikhdoms, Egypt and Syria. In doing so, it has upset those very states which provide it financial, material, moral and political assistance. Besides, the move has further alienated the United States and Israel - nations without whose support there can be no peaceful solution to the Middle East question. In addition, they did not adequately take into cognisance the crucial point that the outcome of the Gulf crisis would be the military defeat of Iraq. They backed the wrong horse, which did not even have justice on its side.

The physical destruction of Kuwait as a result of the Iraqi invasion and liberation efforts have also been quite tremendous, to say the least. Here again the estimates vary, but some place the figure closer to \$ 80 billion as what would be needed for the reconstruction process - this includes the actual rebuilding of the country besides replacing all the damaged or carted away machinery. Interestingly even as all the guns have fallen silent in West Asia, there is trouble brewing within the coalition partners as to how to go about distributing the contracts. If the level of involvement of the outsiders in the liberation of Kuwait is a major factor in awarding contracts, the Japanese are sore over the fact that none of their companies have figured in the first list - Japan may not have paid up to the fast dollar promised but it did pledge some \$ 13 certainly there will be many on Capital Hill who would want to use the Kuwait reconstruction package for obtaining concessions on the Japan-U.S. trade issues. And some would even go to the extent of arguing that as Tokyo's commitment was not commensurate to its dependency of oil from the region, there is no reason why Japanese companies ought to be shown any favourable treatment. Looking at the recent hostilities in the Gulf in terms of winners and losers, is not the way to go about. Rather one would have to examine the prospects

of political changes in individual countries and their impact on the regional and global levels. Of immediate interest is the future of Saddam Hussein himself with reports trickling in of unrest in Basra city and some unusual signs of dissent in the capital city itself. Interestingly, the Iraqi leader is still telling his people about the forces, not once telling his local audience of the kind of humiliating retreat the soldiers did from Kuwait. Militarily, his machine is crippled to the point he can never be a threat to his neighbour in the near future. And it remains to be seen how this military humiliation is going to affect the political fortunes. Till date there is no word about Iraqi casualties as a result of the land war. How is Saddam Hussein going to account for the dead when by all his accounts the battle had just gone 'great' for Iraq? Or what would the reaction of the population be when the Iraqi prisoners of war come home and narrate a totally different story? Getting rid of the Hussein is one thing, but more important how any future Government in Baghdad is going to ensure the survivability of a nation that is not only beset with economic problems but face a whole lot of domestic, political compulsions, such as the demand for autonomy in certain areas?

Saddam Hussein is not the only disappointed person in West Asia. The Palestinians would be too but not for the same reasons. Yasser Arafat and those people in the West Bank and the Gaza were quite happy when Saddam Hussein linked the Palestinian issue to his withdrawal from Kuwait. In fact, this insistence did pay off in the initial weeks for some in the Arab and in the Western worlds did seem to approve of the idea though not in direct linkages terms. But as the military heat became unbearable and saving his skin becoming more important, the Iraqi dictator dropped the Palestinian issue like a hot potato. The Palestinian leader had pinned so much hopes on Saddam Hussein, that he completely lost out with his one-time benefactors, politically and economically. Seen as pro-Hussein, Arafat found himself unwelcome in some parts of the Gulf and the direct economic contributions were cut with regimes in the area not inclined to keep afloat the financial machine of the PLO. In the immediate context there is the fear about the fate of the Palestinians who are living in Kuwait who have all been clubbed as being collaborators of Saddam Hussein's seven month unwelcome stay in Kuwait. If there is any official or unofficial acts of retribution, this could plunge the small country into further chaos which could delay the reconstruction process.<sup>23</sup>

What does President George Bush's inclusion of resolution of the Palestinian problem as basic to a "new world order" in his address to a joint session of Congress mean? Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has lost the

war and his belated attempt to link Iraq's occupation of Kuwait with Israel's hold on the occupied Palestinian territories has come to nought. In fact, his "forgetting" the linkage in the last days of the war has shown up his concern for the Palestinians to have been only a ploy to save face and get Arab support for his aggression on Kuwait. In this respect President Bush has shown statesmanship by addressing himself to the Palestinian question as soon as the Gulf war was over and the "linkage" issue dead. His Secretary of State James Baker, has been told to discuss with regional leaders on his current trip to West Asia a solution to this issue among others that are basic towards finding a lasting peace in the region. President Bush has also said that a solution would be based on a "territory for peace" principle as spelt out in UN resolutions. But as US officials have clarified this does not mean an independent Palestinian State but the old idea of some kind of federation with Jordan or some arrangement which falls short of independence. "A two track" approach of an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and an Arab-Israeli peace would be followed. Whatever the shortcomings of the plan, it is not yet settled whether there will be an international peace conference or what form the dialogue will take and who will participate. Even if Palestinians in their present desperate state of having backed the wrong side in the Gulf conflict are prevailed upon to ditch the PLO which is now unacceptable to the US as well as Israel and choose other interlocutors will Israel agree? Hawks led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in the aftermath of the Scud attacks are more vehement than ever on a greater Israel. The Arab coalition states are angry with the Palestinians and at least for the present might not press their cause. Syria may also, like Egypt under the Camp David agreements, be keener to do a deal to get back the Golan Heights from Israel. But as everyone knows, not least the west, without a solution to the Palestinian issue West Asia can know no peace. For Palestine remains the rallying call for the Arab masses. If the US shows sincerity in finding a solution, it will not only ease the tensions but abate the anti-American feelings of many Arabs.<sup>24</sup>

The Americans are now casting around for someone who can repair Iraq. But the nation, unlike a broken plate, cannot be mended with glue. Its problems - the Kurdish rebellion, for example, which began in 1959 - long preceded Saddam Hussein. Added to this now is the Shia uprising, a phenomenon which must be taken doubly seriously since it did not occur during the Iran-Iraq war. Most depressing for the Arabs was the letter written to the US president by 240 members of the House of Representatives, announcing that Arab recognition of Israel should be the first priority in the peace "process" - and that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait should

set an example by being first to take the step. Had not America gone to war on their behalf? Thus are Americans trying to endorse their victory against Iraq in Israel's favour. The Arabs are so weak that they may now accept this formula. This, after all, what was enshrined in Camp David: peace and recognition of Israel followed by a solution to the Palestinian question. Only, of course, Israel failed to deliver on the Palestinians.

James Baker's visit to Damascus has given new legitimacy to president Hafez al-Assad's Bathist regime, with its deplorable human rights record. More than 500 Palestinians seized in Lebanon over the past six years have been released from Syrian prisons, together with dozens of Lebanese and seven of General Michel Aoun's ex-officers. Gen Aoun himself remains a lonely diabetic in the French ambassador's residence in Beirut, a warning that Saddam Hussein had failed to take seriously. As a result of its Gulf alliance, however, Syria has now received up to £ 1.5 bn (\$ 810m) from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>25</sup>

Notwithstanding the French and Soviet advice, the Anglo-Saxons are hell bent on carrying the war to Baghdad with the objective of destroying Saddam who, besides being a pillar of strength to the Palestinians, symbolised Arab's aspirations to be masters of their own destiny. It is his defiance of the West that attracted the Muslim masses across the board. In Western calculations, once Saddam is off the scene, it would be easier to deal with the Palestinians as Arab ruling elite has never been so much divided against itself as it is in the post-Gulf war period. But the specter of Palestinians continues to haunt not only the Arab rulers but also the Western alliance. The French, Spaniards and Italians have already demarcated themselves from the US and British position on the issue of Arabs in general, and of Palestinians, in particular. The Saudi, Kuwaiti and Syrian rulers are not the so called Israeli security. They cannot abandon the Palestinians just because the US has destroyed Iraq. The message was quite clear in secretary of state James Baker's conversations with Arab rulers. Sensing the Arab mood and its consequences for stability of the region, the Zionist lobby has stepped up pressure on the Bush administration to secure the Saudi and Kuwaiti recognition of Israeli's right to exist which the Egyptians have already done. Now the pressure is on Saudi and Kuwaiti rulers to recognise Israel's right to exist as a starting point for negotiating Palestinians demands. Most of the nations of the world recognise Israel's right to exist. But they also want Palestinian homeland. It was on this issue that Saddam refused to budge. Once Saddam is dumped, the US hopes it will be able to get other Arab states round to accepting Israeli's existence. Whether it will make any sense to Israeli hard-liners to concede Pales-

tinians demand for homeland is to be seen. If the elimination of Saddam is not backed by a solution of the Palestinian problem the Arab world will witness both fundamentalist and radical upsurge making it difficult for Saudi and Gulf rulers to survive. In any case, the demand for democratisation of the various Arab regimes is bound to gather momentum in the period ahead. It was easier to win an already lost war, it is much more difficult to win peace in West Asia.<sup>26</sup>

Nimer Al-Mughrabi was a 15-year-old student when his family fled their home near Beit Shemesh during the 1948 war that created the state of Israel. Today, after 43 years in exile, he is one of nearly 400,000 Palestinians living in refugee camps in the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip, many of whom still dream of going home one day.

"I was forced to leave my house and land, hopping to go back after two weeks. But here I am still waiting for that invisible moment," said Al-Mughrabi.

For Al-Mughrabi, now a retired day labourer, and most other Palestinians, memories of lost homes have been jogged by US secretary of state James A Baker's mission to the Middle East to push for peace with Israel.

Al Mughrabi sat on a balcony overlooking Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem, quiet on a Saturday morning. Some children rolled hoops and others played the Intifadah game, a portrayal of the Palestinians. 40-month revolt against Israeli occupation. In the game, one group of youngsters threw stones like activists. Others chased them through the rutted, dirty streets pretending to fire toy guns in imitation of Israeli soldiers.

On surrounding balconies and porches, their parents and grandparents sat, sipping thick Arabic coffee and discussing Al-Wadia - the situation.

For the 5,000 Palestinians of Aida, the talk is almost always politics: the uprising, Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and, lately, James Baker's peace mission.

Camp residents argued that U.S. President George Bush was only sending Baker to cool off the Middle East after the Gulf war, not to really make peace. Some said local Palestinian leaders should not have met with Baker. Baker's visit was useless, a waste of time, said Ahmad, a 27-year-old activist, who recently lost his gardener's job in Jerusalem after the army issued him the green identity card forbidding to enter Israel.

Returning to the land lost when Israel was created in 1948 is the common desire of almost all in the camp, whether poor or middle class, educated or not.

Jadallah, a 27-year-old political science student at Bethlehem university, said refugee youngsters are brought up on United Nation's handouts, hatred for Jews and parents' memories of homes that grow rosier with the years.

Al-Mughrabi remembers Zakaria, a village near what is now the Israeli town of Beit Shemesh, 20 km west of Jerusalem. He said his family grew wheat there, kept bees for honey, and raised sheep that provided youngurt, butter and cheese.

The Palestinians living in the 28 refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza are among 1.7 million residents of the territories. About 1.5 million other refugees live in surrounding Arab states, including 450,000 in camps.

The camps were started by the United Nations in the late 1940s and early 50s as tent cities. They have grown into crumbling expanses of cement block houses, groceries, garages and small shops. In the occupied West Bank and Gaza, some are surrounded by high fences and guarded by Israeli soldiers.

Aida is heavily guarded because the legendary tomb of Rachel, the biblical Jewish matriarch, is on the camp grounds. Seven residents of Aida were among the 819 Palestinians killed in the uprising.

Jadallah, the bearded Bethlehem university student, said refugees have stopped talking about driving the Israelis into the sea. But he added that many still resist recognising the country that seized their homeland and now wants to keep the West Bank and Gaza.

Outside a tiny grocery store in Aida, a group of youths gathered to discuss reports about James Baker considering another Mid-East trip. Some said the United States should deal with the PLO in Tunis, not with Palestinian figures in the territories.

Wittingly or unwittingly, President Saddam Hussein not only aroused the hopes of his people but also of the Palestinians as well as of the Third World. At one stage, he was eulogised for standing up to the 'Goliath'. But his sudden climb down has shattered the tough-guy image he had projected for himself. He is now seen as a mere paper tiger. This would be particularly painful for the Palestinians who saw in Saddam Hussein's success a ray of hope for their own future. They are back to square one. What shape their frustration would take only time can tell.<sup>27</sup>

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's championing of the Palestinian cause turned out to be a hoax, but nobody would disagree that had it not been for the fraud propaganda and its success, the issue would have been in limbo. The arguments for and against a linkage are both valid depending

on the context and inclination. Saddam Hussein could not invade one country and then hold the world to ransom. Equally, say many people, how can one invasion be treated differently by the U.N., from the naked invasion of Lebanon that ended only in a partial withdrawal by Israel that it still holds? Why is the U.S. insistent on Iraq complying with all Resolutions while doing nothing to implement Resolutions 242 and 338 that as a first step require Israel to vacate the occupied areas?

There is a distortion in these arguments. The U.N. Security Council resolution No. 242 goes beyond getting Israel to pull out. It speaks of secure boundaries for Israel and others. Hence the first step that Israel must do is to declare that in principle it agrees to trading land for peace. Next it must at least be made to reverse the annexation of the Golan Heights and of East Jerusalem. All this would move ahead if the U.S. can wield a real heavy stick on Israel.<sup>28</sup>

PLO leader Yasser Arafat has said Palestinians will avenge the treatment meted out to their countrymen in Kuwait.

This was stated in a message to Kuwaiti Sheikh Jaber, on July 5, 1991. Arafat also warned Kuwaiti Crown Prince Saad Abdullah that no one can prevent Palestinians from avenging their elimination, torture, ill-treatment and being sentenced to long prison terms under the "false accusation" that they were collaborating with the Iraqi occupation forces.

Parallel with this warning some 2,000 people were demonstrating outside the UN office in Amman since Thursday night. They were mostly relatives of Palestinians who were executed and sentenced in Kuwait. The demonstrators demand an "end to terror", release of the imprisoned Palestinians and Jordanians and abolishment of their sentences.

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## IDEOLOGICAL WARFARE

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Murder includes the use of force not only with specific intent to kill but also with wanton indifference to human life, as U.S. courts have consistently confirmed. Since the *intifada's* beginning three years ago, more than 700 Palestinians have been killed and many thousands wounded by troops firing live ammunition or plastic bullets at lethally close range. Of those killed as of May 1990, close to 150 were aged 16 or younger; Amnesty International USA reports that about 35 were less than 12 years old. The Israeli government does not claim that most or even many of the persons killed in confrontations with security forces have carried or used firearms or grenades. Indeed, according to Israeli Defense Force (IDF) figures, only about 5 per cent of violent activity by Palestinians involved the use of clearly lethal weapons, defined as guns, knives, and gasoline bombs; 85 per cent is stone throwing, 60 per cent of which is carried out by children 12 years old or younger. The great majority of shootings by the IDF are associated with either alleged incidents of stone throwing and other riotous behaviour, or attempted flight to avoid capture. Other countries, at comparable levels of technological and administrative sophistication, have dealt with serious outbursts of rioting without persistent recourse to deadly force. Student demonstrators in South Korea have repeatedly used rocks and fire bombs in confrontations with the riot police. Yet, in the past few years, fatalities have been rare. Shortly before the October 1990 confrontation on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, in which Israeli police shot to death 21 Palestinian demonstrators and wounded about 150, a crowd estimated at more than 1,000 attacked police in Osaka with rocks and fire bombs. In dispersing the crowd, the police suffered 140 injuries and two police facilities were damaged, yet no fatalities were reported. Japanese and Korean riot police are normally equipped with riot shields, which offer good protection against stones and other thrown missiles. Properly equipped and sufficiently numerous riot control forces

generally will not find themselves in a position where they believe deadly force is required for self-defense. In contrast, riot shields are rarely issued to Israeli forces, who are often sent to patrol in small groups. After almost two decades of episodic resistance by the inhabitants of the occupied territories, the intifada found Israeli security forces poorly prepared for riot control. So the initial use of deadly force could reasonably be attributed to inexperience and inadequate equipment. But the killing and wounding has now continued for more than three years, a fact even more damning when contrasted with other governments' success in controlling violent demonstrators without recourse to deadly forces, and with the Israeli government's relative success in controlling violence in Jerusalem - before the Temple Mount incident - where the police have operated under stricter guidelines and closer supervision.<sup>1</sup>

One cause of the numerous deaths and serious injuries is the IDF's open-fire guidelines. In the early stages of the intifada, soldiers were authorized to shoot a fleeing person if there were "reasonable" ground to suspect him or her of involvement in a terrorist act or a "serious felony," and if the person did not stop after oral warnings and shots in the air. Among the serious felonies listed in the orders are "malicious damage to property for ideological purposes" and "membership and activity in a hostile organization." Neither offense necessarily entails a threat, immediate or long term, to anyone's safety. But in the summer of 1989, to anyone's safety. But in the summer of 1989, the IDF expanded authorized targets to include "all persons wearing masks and acting suspiciously," whether or not they were suspected of terrorism or a serious felony. While soldiers are ordered to shoot at legs, "bad aim" is not deemed a punishable offense. The Israeli government concedes that scores of persons have been killed by fleeing troops. Given the likelihood of beatings and torture by Israeli authorities and the risk of detention for a year or more under vile conditions without charge or trial, Palestinians have strong motives to flee, even if they are not members of violent cadres and have not otherwise been involved in what the occupation authorities define as serious felonies.

The consequences of rules that wantonly authorize life-threatening fire are aggravated because, in the words of Middle East Watch, "the IDF does not investigate thoroughly, and does not prosecute many a case where there is evidence of serious abuse." Similarly, the State Department argues that "regulations often were not vigorously enforced, many cases of unjust killing did not result in disciplinary action, and punishments often were lenient." As one of several examples in cities the following cases:

Four members of an elite IDF unit.....were cleared of manslaughter charges and convicted on reduced charges of "causing grievous bodily harm" in the 1988 beating death of a Gazan. The court found their officers had issued "manifestly illegal orders" in authorizing the beatings, but there was no prosecution of the officers. The nine-month sentences of the soldiers were later commuted to six months.

In the light of the open-fire guidelines, the inadequate investigation of shooting deaths, the derisory penalties imposed on delinquent troops, and the performance of security forces of other nations in demanding contexts, the carnage in the occupied territories is clearly the result of wanton indifference to the crippling and death of the territories' non-Jewish inhabitants. If Israeli behaviour is driven by the conviction that the episodic use of deadly force serves as a deterrent and is therefore a relatively efficient means for suppressing resistance to Israeli rule, then that behaviour may properly be described as a form of state terrorism: the employment of force or the threat thereof against a limited set of targets for the purpose of engendering fear in a larger audience and thereby advancing political ends.<sup>2</sup>

To assist in repressing the intifada, the Israeli government has empowered military authorities to imprison individuals without formal charge or trial for renewable periods of up to 12 months each. An individual may be detained whenever a commander has "reasonable cause to believe that reasons of state security or public security require (it)." For reasons of security the commander may also refuse to reveal the basis for his belief and to specify the acts imputed to the detainee. According to a June-July 1989 report by the International Commission of Jurists, since the beginning of the intifada, some 5,500 Palestinians have been subjected to detention orders; some 1,500 were still in custody two years later. Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention provides in part that "if the Occupying Power considers it necessary, for imperative reasons of security, to take safety measures concerning protected persons, it may, at the most, subject them to assigned residence or to internment." The ICRC adds that "only absolute necessity...can justify recourse to these two measures, and only then if security cannot be safeguarded by other, less severe means."

It is very doubtful that the requirement of "imperative reasons of security" can be satisfied other than during a war or an armed uprising. (The IDF characterizes the intifada as a situation of "civil unrest.") In any event, Israel has failed to demonstrate that the measure is absolutely

necessary rather than merely useful. But those are by no means the most serious objections to Israeli behavior. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country." The only exception is for evacuation in connection with military operations and even then only when "it is impossible to avoid such displacement." Article 76 states without qualification that "protected persons accused of offences shall be detained in the occupied country... and shall enjoy conditions of food and hygiene which will be sufficient to keep them in good health." Administrative detainees, since they are not even accused, are an a fortiori case. Many of those Palestinians still in custody are sent to the Ketziot internment camp, which has become a case study of Israeli violations of the Geneva Conventions. Since its reopening in March 1988, the camp, which is located in the Negev desert in southern Israel, houses the largest concentration of administrative detainees. Summer temperatures at Ketziot often reach and exceed 100° F. Yet, in a November 1988 judgment dismissing a petition brought by 17 detainees, the Israeli Supreme Court stated that the tents in which detainees are accommodated are so cramped that they are forced to lie next to each other "with no space between one mattress and the next." Moreover, the relatively small size of the compound in relation to the number of detainees and the prohibition on the gathering in large numbers outside the tents "result in the detainees staying in (them) during most of the hours of the day." They eat and pray in the tents. A representative of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights who visited the camp in April 1988 reported that the compound he visited contained an open toilet facility in one corner. An IDF officer stationed at Ketziot told the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that sanitary conditions are "very severe." The newspaper cited other military sources as reporting that detainees were suffering from diarrhea and vomiting. After two unarmed detainees were shot to death by Israeli troops at Ketziot during a violent disturbance in 1988, the ICRC, in a rare public statement, said: "The ICRC has repeatedly stressed, said: 'The ICRC has repeatedly stressed to the Israeli authorities that detention and internment of persons from the occupied territories on Israeli soil, particularly in the harsh climatic conditions prevailing in this case, was not compatible with the provisions for the Fourth Geneva Convention.'"<sup>3</sup>

The West Bank Data Base Project, organized by former Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Meron Benvenisti, puts the figure of those expelled since 1967 under formal deportation orders at just under 2,000. Whatever the actual number, the practice violates the Fourth Convention's requirement that punishment never be inflicted without due process of law. According

to the State Department's 1989 Country Report, "the deportation process is characterized by a lack of formal charges and the use of secret evidence not disclosed to the suspect or his attorney." And while Palestinians under deportation orders can appeal to the Israeli High Court, according to the U.S. State Department no appeal has yet been successful.

Formal deportees are alleged to be security threats to Israel. Security is not, however, the only basis for expelling or excluding Palestinians. The State Department reports that:

Israel sometimes refuses to renew laissez-passers of Palestinians from the occupied territories who live or work abroad on the ground that they have abandoned their residence, even though they may not have acquired foreign citizenship....Entry or residency permission is frequently denied spouses, relatives, and children following the emigration of the head of the household.

In addition, Israel has blocked the return of former West Bank residents who were not present in the territories at the time of the 1967 census. And Israeli policy further contributes to thinning out the non-Jewish population by generally denying residence permits to persons from outside the territory who marry Palestinian residents, thereby encouraging the latter to emigrate.

A consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. For the past 23 years, the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories have continued to live under what amounts to an authoritarian government that exercises close supervision over many aspects of their social and working lives. The Israeli government has formally annexed a part of the territories, namely old East Jerusalem and substantial adjoining land. Seizing privately held and through various legal and administrative guises is practiced throughout the West Bank. And while refraining from formal annexation of the remainder of the territories, Israel has declared that it will not relinquish control and that it has a superior claim to such possession. Meanwhile, through subsidies, public works, and other incentives, Israel has fostered the settlement of its Jewish citizens in the territories. And it has in effect set aside the preponderance of the land for the continued expansion of such settlements. The Israeli government's open effort to settle current and prospective Jewish citizens in the territories clearly violates Article 49's command that the "Occupying Power shall not....transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."<sup>4</sup>



Other aspects of Israeli rule arguably violate one or another convention provision and indisputably violate human rights norms. In its 1989 Country Report, the State Department identifies on going violations of the following rights:

- The right of citizens to form political parties and to elect their government. Israel bans Palestinian political parties and has not allowed even municipal elections in the territories since 1976. Most mayors elected then were later dismissed on security grounds.
- The right to peaceful assembly and association. Aside from the ban on political parties as such, the Israeli administration uses its compulsory registration requirement (among other means) to prevent the formation of charitable, community, professional, and self-help organizations if their activities are viewed as overtly political. Additionally, military orders ban public gatherings of 10 or more people without a permit.
- Freedom of speech and press. The indigenous Arab press is subject to tight restrictions and censorship. Articles and editorials relating to Palestinian political goals or the uprising, though sometimes permitted, are routinely censored. The State Department reports that "Arabic translations of uprising-related news stories which had previously appeared in the Hebrew language press were routinely expurgated from the Arabic press.... A military order closing a prominent Palestinian press service was renewed, and two other Palestinian services were closed."
- In addition, "the display of Palestinian political symbols, such as flags, national colors, and graffiti is punishable by fines, detention, or imprisonment."
- The right to a fair trial. Palestinians accused of "security offenses" - a term that covers nationalist activity of a non-violent character - are tried in military courts. Acquittals, according to the State Department, are "very rare" since most convictions are based on confessions. The State Department says that "the absence of bail, long pretrial delays, and physical and psychological pressures increase the likelihood of confessions. These are usually recorded in Hebrew, which many defendants are unable to read." Further, arrests require no warrant and can be executed by any soldier. Once arrested, individuals may be held for 96 hours without a warrant from any judicial authority and may be, and routinely are, held for up to 18 days without formal charges and without access to counsel. Finally, cases are heard by a single judge, who can impose prison sentences of up to five years, and may be appealed only with the permission of the court.

- These procedures considered as a whole are flagrantly inconsistent with the paradigm of a fair trial delineated in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and fail to meet the more precarious requirements of Article 3 of the Fourth Convention, which prohibits the passing of sentences other than by "a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples."
- The right not be the object of discrimination based on race, sex, religion, language, or social status. The 1989 State Department report declares that under the system of governance applied to Palestinians - both Muslim and Christian - and Israelis, Palestinians are treated less favorably than Israeli settlers on a broad range of issues, including the right to due process, right of residency, freedom of movement, sale of crops and goods, land and water use, and access to health and social services.
- Among the various forms of discrimination elaborated, the report notes Israel's continued practice of plac(ing) land under its control for military purposes, roads, settlements, and other purposes which restrict use by Palestinians and discriminate in favor of Israeli settlers against Palestinians. Palestinians do not participate in the Higher Planning Council, which plans land use in the occupied territories and exercises planning powers transferred from local, municipal, and village councils in 1971. Issuance of permits to Palestinians for house construction is tightly restricted.

The only meticulously researched West Bank Data Base Project elaborates on the State Department's conclusions and demonstrates conclusively an Israeli policy of restricting the Palestinian population to existing towns and villages. For Arabs, residential, commercial, and agricultural activities are virtually frozen at present levels.<sup>5</sup>

The second basic parallel between the Gulf and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts concerns the right to self-determination. The U.N. General Assembly's Consensus Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States declares that all peoples have a right to self-determination and "that subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a violation of the principle (of self-determination), as well as a denial of fundamental human rights and is contrary to the Charter." And, with particular relevance to the Palestinian-Israeli relationship, the declaration goes on to say that:

the territory of a colony or other Non-Self-Governing Territory has....a status separate and distinct from the territory of the State administering it; and such separate and distinct status under the Charter shall exist until the people of the colony or Non-Self-Governing Territory have exercised their right of self-determination.

From the time of its founding, the U.N. has deemed territories to be non-self-governing and subject to alien domination when most of following factors are present: (1) The territory is not contiguous to the place where the administering authority is located; (2) the administering authority is staffed, at least at its apex, by persons distinguished by race, culture, or religion from the bulk of the administered populations; (3) the administering authority itself imputes a distinct and subordinate status to the administered territory or to the majority of its people; and (4) the majority of the people in the territory do not participate in the election of the administering authority. That Palestine, a former Ottoman-ruled territory acquired by Britain as a League-of Nations Mandate at the close of World War-I, satisfied this definition is obvious.

Partition of colonial territories has occasionally been accepted as a necessary expedient when a territory's inhabitants seemed hopelessly divided by conflicting nationalist aspirations. Britain found that to be the case in India; a Western-led General Assembly majority came to the same conclusion in 1947 in the case of Palestine. The U.N. partition reflected both the apparent irreconcilability of Palestine's Jewish and Arab populations and the normative tension built into the British mandate, as interpreted by the British government: the promise to allow the Jewish people to establish a national home in the mandated territory and the promise that its establishment would not result in the subordination of the territory's Arab inhabitants. Having decided to recognize two peoples with adjacent rights of self-determination, the leading states of the U.N. left the enforcement of their decision to the violent arbitration of regional forces. The result was a Jewish state occupying virtually all the territory allocated to the Jewish inhabitants by the U.N. partition, plus a substantial portion of the area allocated to the Arab inhabitants. The Palestinians, on the other hand, found themselves either as ethnic-religious minorities within the State of Israel, subjects of the Jordanian monarchy that had occupied the remaining portion of the partitioned land, or stateless refugees. Israel was satisfied with this situation, having established its statehood and finding itself under no special pressure to readmit the tens of thousands of Arabs

who had fled or been driven from their homes. The Jordanian royal family was equally satisfied, finding itself in possession of East Jerusalem, a nice slice of the West Bank and under little serious pressure to yield to the will of the Palestinians, even though the majority of Arab and other states refused to recognize Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank territories. The United States and the Soviet Union, both backers of the Zionist bid for statehood, were also satisfied. With so many satisfied parties and so many more pressing matters on the international agenda at the time, the majority of U.N. members seemed to forget that just a few years earlier they had recognized the Palestinian people and endowed them with equal rights. Left for dead in the aftermath of Israel's War of Independence, Palestinian national rights seemed to be formally buried in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict. The outline of a post-war settlement agreed to by Israel, Egypt, and Jordan, and incorporated in U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, envisioned the return to Jordanian and Egyptian hands of all or most of the territories occupied by Israel in exchange for treaties of peace that guaranteed Israel's "secure" boundaries. The Palestinians were dismissively incorporated into the grand scheme in the form of a refugee problem to be somehow resolved; there was not a word about rights of self-determination. Yet what seemed to be the absolute end of Palestinian hopes proved to be a new beginning. Israel's humiliating rout of the front-line Arab states and its patent indifference to Palestinian aspirations undoubtedly helped galvanize Palestinian national feeling, of this resurgent national consciousness consisted of minor but dramatic feats of violence. But more than anything else, the consolidation and hardening of Palestinian nationalism was a dialectical response to Jewish nationalism and, as such, was inevitable. Vaulting onto the stage of world politics, the Palestinians found a vastly altered and more sympathetic audience than the one that had observed their initial debate debacle. In less than a decade their umbrella organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), achieved formal recognition by the U.N. and the Arab League as the legitimate representative of "a people under alien domination." Meanwhile, Jordan progressively yielded its claims of suzerainty over the occupied territories. Some two decades after it appeared to be extinguished, the Palestinians' self-determination claim was transformed into a solid legal right. The right of self-determination exists for the same reason that any other right or obligation exists: because most states say it does. Unanimity is not required to establish a rule of international law, much less its application in a particular circumstance. The community of states has determined that

the general rule of self-determination applies to the Palestinians. Given the history of the territories and the partition resolution, the Palestine claim is reasonable, perhaps even inevitable. National borders in the Persian Gulf were drawn at the insistence of British imperial power. They reflect no historical logic, no morally attractive principle, no widely shared political goal. Nonetheless, Iraq, by crossing the line drawn by Britain decades ago for its own convenience, has committed the crime of aggressive war because almost all states believe it to be so. That is the ultimate test of what is law. The Palestinians have a conditional legal right to self-determination, a right to form an independent political community in some part of the territory that was granted to them in the U.N. partition of 1947. If the Israelis conceded the right of Palestinian self-determination but claimed that it cannot be exercised under existing conditions because the Palestinians do not provide sufficient guarantees for the identical right of the Jewish people, then the Israelis would be on firm ground. Moving to that ground, however, involves conceding that the Arab population of the occupied territories, including the formally annexed areas, is there by legal right. It is inconsistent, moreover, with the policy of denying political expression to the Arab population. And it is incompatible with the Israeli policy of freezing Arab society while encouraging the settlement of Jews on land in the occupied territories. The Israeli government is unwilling, for ideological and strategic reasons, to contemplate either the loss of the occupied territories or the granting of equal rights to all their non-Jewish inhabitants or even the realization of authentic autonomy for the territories under an Arab-majority government. In short, it is unwilling to participate in creating the conditions that would allow the Palestinians to determine their future. Instead, Israel prefers to make its stand on legal quicksand. The third parallel is quickly stated. Israel has repeatedly defied requests, proposals, and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It has done so when decisions were driven over Western opposition by the sheer numerical weight of the non-aligned bloc; it has done so when decisions were virtually unanimous.<sup>6</sup>

The U.N. has recognized a Palestinian right to self-determination; Israel denies it. The Security Council has called for application of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories; Israel refused to apply it. The U.N. has found the unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem to be unlawful; Israel says the status of Jerusalem is non-negotiable and hastens to alter the religious/ethnic balance of East Jerusalem's population. The Security Council has called on Israel to end the deportation of

Palestinians; Israel continues to deport them. Thus the recent refusal to cooperate with the inquiry into the Temple Mount killings requested by the Security Council is simply another in a long line of defiant acts. When charged with defiance of general international law and of its obligations under the U.N. Charter, the Israeli government has responded by declaring itself the victim of a double standard and of threats to its sovereignty. Both defenses are meretricious. Of course some, but by no means all, states with much worse human rights records have escaped censure and sanction. But Israeli violations are much more serious and extensive than most Americans realize. In relation to the inhabitants of the occupied territories, Israel's record is not plainly better than that of former President Augusto Pinochet's regime in Chile. In both cases, challenges to a non-democratic order were met with deadly violence, beatings, cruel forms of interrogation, detention without due process, collective punishment of one form or another, and deportation. The U.N. - as well as the Organization of American States - repeatedly dragged Chile before the bar of international public opinion. An ad hoc committee established by the General Assembly investigated and condemned conditions in that country. Although claims of a double standard may have been relevant 20 years ago, today, they are largely unfounded. Until the mid-1970s the U.N. was quite indifferent to the violation of human rights other than in southern Africa and the West Bank. But since then, the institution has become dramatically less myopic. Afghanistan, Argentina, Guatemala, and Poland are some of the other U.N. members whose practices have been exposed. But even with respect to the earlier period, the claim of a double standard fails to take account of the fact that the concern of most U.N. members for human rights was inhibited by sensitivity to claims of sovereignty (the protection of which is a central value of the U.N. Charter). That inhibition did not function where the victims of atrocity enjoyed a right to self-determination. Indeed, as in the Israeli case, violation of the latter right was seen to aggravate other delinquencies. This widespread perception of aggravated delinquency endures. Today official and unofficial committees of inquiry swarm over the globe investigating the internal behavior of sovereign regimes of every ideological stripe. Toleration of the investigators' entry, even varying degrees of cooperation, have become the norm. Governments increasingly accommodate scrutiny even of the electoral process from which they claim to derive legitimacy. For years the Soviet Union led the chorus condemning human rights inquiry as an intolerable intervention in matters essentially domestic. Now it and many other countries have fallen silent; but Israel

sings on. Saddam Hussein has inadvertently presented the community of states with a marvelous opportunity to reestablish expectations that the principal norms of the U.N. will be enforced. The United States can on its own drive him from Kuwait and crush his national base. But to make a lasting peace in the Gulf, the United States must act in concert with, or at least with the uncoerced concurrence of, many other states - particularly the Arab states. Maintaining that concurrence both during the period of sanctions and conflict and afterwards, as the United States attempts to stabilize the area, will be increasingly difficult if the United States seems indifferent to the parallel, though less-exigent, legal claims of an Arab people who have no oil. If the United States imposes a solution on the Gulf without broad support among governments and alert publics, it may lay the tinder for a renewed conflagration that could eventually consume all that it has fought to preserve. At best the United States will have reaffirmed the law of power. To reaffirm the power of law, it must demonstrate that no state in the Middle East is exempt from law's commands.

At the most crucial point in its history, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is torn by an internal division between moderates, willing to compromise now in return for a state in the Occupied Territories, and hardliners unwilling to accept any hint of negotiation with Israel. What the moderates fear most is that PLO chairman Yassar Arafat, in trying to please everyone, will fail to move quickly and decisively enough to capitalise on the post war momentum in the Middle East, and in the end could lose out completely.<sup>7</sup>

Said one leading moderate: "There is a train moving slowly through the station and if we don't get on it, no one is going to stop it for us this time, not for 20 more years."

The rift was illustrated when Arafat said he would concede land from the Occupied Territories to be used as a United Nations zone between a future Palestinian state and Israel - then backed away from the statements hours later.

In an interview that first appeared in the Toronto Star, he said: "I accept United Nations forces between both of us, for any period they want on our property, okay, on our side, in our side."

"In some places there would be a permanent presence for the United Nations forces. I accept it.....not only in the zone, but in many areas," he said.

Arafat also said a Palestinian state could follow the Namibian example, which included a six-month demilitarisation supervised by the UN.

He said the issue of a link between Gaza and the West Bank could be "discussed in detail on the table," and that he would accept to have Jews in his cabinet if they decided to abandon Zionism and go to live in Palestine. All this made world news and headlines that said that the PLO was ready for territorial concessions - anathema to the hardliners. Within hours of the story's first publication in Canada, the PLO news agency WAFA issued a statement charging that the report distorted Mr. Arafat's comments. In a separate statement, WAFA quoted a political writer as saying the leadership could not possibly have released such detailed plans at this time, as it "surely knows it is too early to talk about fundamental things, let alone details." In the end, the Toronto Star published portions of the interview transcript taken from a tape recording to show that Mr. Arafat had clearly made the statements.<sup>8</sup>

It comes down to this: Arafat said one thing in the interview, with the encouragement of PLO moderates; then an attempt was made to withdraw his remarks after an outcry from the hardliners. That struggle has left many worried that the PLO will repeat what happened in 1947 - refuse to compromise, hold out for more and lose it all. Under the 1947 UN partition plan, the Palestinians would have received much more territory than they are now seeking. But they refused the plan, hoping to keep all Palestine. The rest is history. Within the PLO, there was even debate over whether PLO-sponsored Palestinians should meet US secretary of state James Baker. Palestinians who live in the territories are adding their voices to the struggle demanding better representation in the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and pushing for the creation of a Palestinian government in exile that would include members from the territories. A leading Palestinian newspaper in the territories, *Al Fajr*, recently started a section that will feature proposals from intellectuals and discuss relations between Palestinians inside and outside the territories. A top Palestinian journalist in the territories, Hanna Seniora, has said, "Some parts are trying to create a rift between Palestinians inside and outside the territories. There are some efforts at the international, Arab and Israeli level to create this rift." He suggested the election of an equal number of PNC members from the territories as a necessary step to "move the peace process ahead faster." Mr. Seniora said his proposals should help the PLO. Certainly, the United States would seem eager to play on any such rift by suggesting the Palestinians need not be represented by the PLO. Working closely with Palestinians in the territories could well serve the purposes of the US. If the Americans feel it is in their interest to live up to their commitment to deal with the Palestinian problem, avoiding the PLO and dealing directly with

the territories might be the quickest route. The Israelis would be more disposed to talk with someone other than the PLO. And leaders in the territories could be more anxious to make a deal and free themselves from under the boot of military occupation.<sup>9</sup>

And if they did manage to drive a wedge between Palestinians in the territories and those outside, the US could savour the sweet revenge of helping to grant Palestinian autonomy while at the same time keeping Arafat out in the cold - the ultimate punishment for his support of Iraq during the Gulf war. For his part, Arafat did acknowledge that the US now has a key role to play in getting the Israelis to sit down at the table.

"Definitely, this is the challenge.....Definitely, they have the upper hand now and specially after the Gulf war."<sup>10</sup>

And while making no apologies for his strong anti-coalition stance during the Gulf war, Arafat doggedly defended his leadership and the PLO's right to represent the Palestinian People.

"I am astonished. In this new order that America is offering to the world, do they want to appoint the leaders in this area? I have been elected by my people. We are proud of our democracy."

He again defended his actions during the Gulf crisis, which included such inflammatory remarks as the suggestion that Palestinians would join Iraqis in the trenches.

When asked about such anti-coalition rhetoric, Arafat immediately produced a copy of the PLO peace plan issued on August 30, the first point of which called for the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait.

"You can read it," said, putting the document on the table and jabbing his finger to paragraph one. "Withdrawal of the Iraqi presence from Kuwait," he said.

In the end, the wily and enigmatic Arafat remained defiant and scoffed at the flood of analysis from pundits and politicians alike saying he is finished, vanquished and that his actions have hurt the Palestinian cause.

But privately, other PLO moderates said they wished Mr. Arafat had put more emphasis on the PLO opposition to the military occupation of Kuwait.

And in Al Fajr, Radi Al-Jarai said steps had to be taken to get out of international position.

Al-Jarai repeated the demand for greater territorial representation on the PNC so that in case of negotiations, the territories would be represented. His proposal carried the implicit warning that otherwise, some people from the territories could undertake negotiations outside the PLO.

But for Mr. Arafat, taking steps of any kind is not so easy when you have one bunch pulling you forward, and another pulling you back.<sup>11</sup>

I have no problem if the Soviets establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. The Soviets have never spoken to us about it before. The Soviets had a very strong relation with the Iraqis. In spite of that, they didn't have an inside track in the Gulf crisis. They had very strong relations with Iraqis in all fields and in all levels, including the endorsement by Saddam of the last peace initiative of Gorbachev. The very strong relations between the two added nothing special to the role the Soviets could play in the Gulf crisis. So, ipso facto, the same thing would apply to the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel. I'm not saying that such relations should not be established. I am saying that it won't help the situation in the Middle East. You see, now the challenge is not facing me. It is facing President Bush, the European leaders and the Arab countries of the coalition. They said they were against the "linkage" which had been declared by Saddam between the Gulf crisis and Palestine. They said, "No linkage. After the Gulf crisis we will deal with that problem." Now, we have to wait and see if they will fulfil this promise to the world. What will these leaders say to their nations? Are they now going to deal with double standards they never would address during the war? Will they force Israel, at least politically - I'm not asking for an armada to be sent - to implement the United Nations resolutions?<sup>12</sup>

What would be the result of not settling the Palestinian issue now?

Complete chaos and confusion in the region. There will be problems in this new Roman empire the US has tried to create. They should remember that Spartacus was a Palestinian.<sup>13</sup>

What does Arafat mean chaos? An escalation of the intifada in the occupied territories?

I am not speaking about the Palestinian arena. There is no chaos there. I am talking about the region as a whole, from Morocco on across the vast Islamic geographic stretch to the Islamic countries in Asia. The chaos will come in very unpredictable ways, which makes it even more frightening. Let me tell you. Directly after the tragedy of 1948, under the two big powers, the British and the French empires, all the regimes in the region, from Mesopotamia to Nile, just as now, faced trouble. That is when the revolution came with Nasser in Egypt. The movement of the Arab masses is always slow. But once it moves, it moves in a furious manner.

In Iran, who can be sure that a new Khomeinism won't be rekindled with a propensity for exporting its own ways?

Doesn't James Baker's trip indicate to Arafat that the US is sincere?

I am sorry to say things aren't progressing as they started in President Bush's address to the Congress on March 6 after the war. We appreciated his mention at that time of UN resolutions 242 and 338, and his talk of exchanging territories for peace, withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories. But, during the meeting with (French) President (Francois) Mitterrand last month in Martinique, he changed what he had said before Congress. No, Bush told Mitterrand, on the self-determination of the Palestinian people; no, on the independent state, no on the role of the PLO; no for the international conference. He said these things in response to Mitterrand's insistence on the conference, the independent state and the PLO as the representative of all Palestinians. Like the rest of the Europeans, who reaffirmed their position at a European Community meeting in Luxembourg early this week, the French have always worked with the PLO officially, including now. They know that the US is now playing geo-politics. And now what is the US proposing? They propose a two-track solution. Normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab states including, may be, a new Camp David to find, not the, but a solution - some kind of autonomy or self-government, a Middle Eastern Bantustan, condominium between Jordan-Israel and Palestine.<sup>14</sup>

And Arafat reject this approach fully?

It's not that I reject it; it can't work. The two-track formula will not work.<sup>15</sup>

Is now planning to establish a provisional government or a government-in-exile?

The American administration has informed us, through indirect channels, that they are against this idea.<sup>16</sup>

Why doesn't the US want Arafat to form such a government?

Because they know this will present at last a real basis for negotiations because it will put the Israelis in the corner. If we become the official government of all Palestinians, inside and outside of the territories - encompassing all sectors of the population - they will have no choice but to talk to us.<sup>17</sup>

For the record, does Arafat still stand behind the statement denouncing terrorism and recognising Israel's existence that Arafat made in Geneva in 1988?

I am committed to what has been declared and accepted by our PNC, what I declared at the General Assembly in Geneva and my Press con-

ference afterward. I have fully respected by commitments to the international community, and I hope they will not respect their commitments to me. It's unfair. We have given so much ground, but get nothing in return.<sup>18</sup>

Are the younger people among the Palestinians starting to think militantly again, that is, in terms of armed struggle?

I'm sorry to say, yes. You don't know what pressure I am facing. I have given instructions to the Intifada not to use weapons. I am facing pressure from the people within the occupied territories and from many Palestinian leaders. Until now, I still say no weapons. It is a miracle that, for the fourth year, they are still following my instructions, despite the massacres. To find weapons in the Middle East? To find weapons in the black market, in the underworld, in Israel? It is so easy. You can buy them even from the soldiers. You can get any weapon you want in Israel, I assure you.

Before the war started in the Gulf, I made an appeal to President Bush to be the hero of the peace, not the hero of war. Now he is the hero of war. But he can still be the hero of the peace if he finds a just solution for the Palestinian people.<sup>19</sup>

What is Yasser Arafat's response to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit in Jerusalem on April 9, 1991 with the Palestinians? It was a good meeting, but with no big results. It was good because this is the second indirect dialogue of the PLO with Baker. It was an exploratory meeting not more than that. Baker said clearly that he had no special proposal. We are not dogmatic, we will have to wait and see. The U.S. knows that no progress can take place in the Arab-Israeli conflict without this piece of paper that bears my signature (he hands over the signed list of approved Palestinian names for Baker's April 9 meeting with Palestinians. Here from Tunis, I drew up a list of participants and gave my instructions for the second meeting with Baker. I thus regard this meeting by Baker as a signal from the U.S. administration that they see the PLO as a main factor in this process. Publicly they say "no PLO", but they know they are meeting the PLO leaders in the occupied territories - twice now. We've given instructions for the Palestinian delegation to deal with Mr. Bush positively within the vision of his March 6 statement to the US Congress. But I know that time is very limited for constructive action. There is a very short period before the election seasons for the US presidency and the Congress begins. I'd say President Bush has no more than eight to 10 months to solve these big problems on the two-track road - the very difficult Arab-Israeli state-to-state normalisation and the Palestinian issue. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is a stubborn man, he wants to escape until the US election

period. I know him. He will try to stall and waste time. If Bush can't get past this obstacle, he will not only lose at home. He will lose in Turkey among Muslims. He will lose in Saudi Arabia. He will lose in Egypt. He will lose in Iran. In time, people will say to their government, why didn't we leave Saddam to get it (Palestinian rights) through his way. Why did we not support him? We were betrayed by the promises of the US. This is not a loud voice now. But it will be in one year if nothing happens now after this catastrophic war.<sup>20</sup>

In effect, in Arafat's view, the US already realises that there is no one to deal with other than the PLO? That is implicit in James Baker's two meetings with Arafat.

They know that. Even the Israelis know that. Yitzhak Rabin knows that Shimon Peres knows that. I would even say that 70 per cent of the Israelis accept this fact. Part of the Likud accepts this.<sup>21</sup>

What about the Israeli statement accepting an "international meeting" aimed at regional security?

It is putting the cart before the horse. There can be no state-to-state security relations with Israel's neighbours while avoiding the crux of those relations - the Palestinian issue. This statement was nothing new for the Israelis. The Israelis called for such a meeting as much as five weeks ago. They called it a "regional event." All the Arab states have rejected a regional security conference, they all insist on dealing with the Palestinian issues first. Others have refused this approach to security, not only me.<sup>22</sup>

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has said that Arab countries should help Iraq defy the UN Security Council directive to destroy its weapons of mass destruction, as ordered in the Gulf War cease-fire accord.

"There countries should intervene with the UN Security council to place non-conventional Iraqi arms under international control until Israel agrees to completely destroy its own weapons of the same nature," Yasser Arafat was quoted as saying at a meeting of the PLO's central council yesterday.

The formal ceasefire approved by the security council, which Baghdad accepted, ordered Iraq to destroy all its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and long range Scud missiles.

Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear missiles but has never acknowledged having them.

The 95-member central council is holding its first meeting since the Gulf war. The council serves as an intermediary between the PLO executive council and the Palestinian national council, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

Palestinian sources said that the central council was working on a declaration reiterating the PLO's long-held view that only an international conference can bring peace to West Asia.

In a request to the UN, Iraq has it to assume responsibility for centres sought to be set up by the US and other coalition forces on its soil to help Kurds fleeing to Turkey.

Iraqi foreign minister also requested UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to immediately appoint a coordinator to take steps aimed at ensuring Iraqi sovereignty.

In a letter to Cuellar, Ahmed Hussein said US and other coalition forces had entered the Zakhou region in northern Iraq to establish centres on Iraqi soil for assisting displaced Iraqi citizens in Turkey.

Iraqis are opposed to this measure, since it constitutes a serious unjustifiable and unfounded attack on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, it said. The letter reminded the UN chief of the agreement concluded by the Iraqi government with the UN representative on April 18 making it possible to define all relief operations in Iraq in an integrated and balanced manner.

A team of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees flies to Baghdad this week to begin implementing the April 18 memorandum of understanding between the UN and Iraq.

The advance team of 10 to 15 international experts will be deployed across the country and will establish field offices in areas of refugees outflow along Turkish and Iranian border.

The Palestinian news agency Wafa said that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat reaffirmed the adherence of the PLO to the convening of an international conference for peace in West Asia under UN auspices.

James Baker, after nearly ten hours of talks with Hafez Assad, prepared for a quick trip to the Soviet Union to talk to Soviet foreign minister Alexander A Bessmertnykh about co-sponsoring the conference.

In Moscow, a spokesman for President Mikhail Gorbachev said the two foreign ministers probably would also discuss plans for a summit meeting. He reiterated that the Soviet leader hopes for a June summit and said one would probably be held then, but US spokesman said no date had been set.

Our position is that in 1988 (at the UN General Assembly in Geneva with the renunciation of terrorism and acceptance of Israel's right to exist) we made an initiative. When Bush spoke before the Congress on March 6, 1991 he spoke of five points; application of UN Resolution No. 242 and



338; land for peace; withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories; legitimate rights of Palestinian people; peace and security of the land of Israel. These principles are not far from the Palestinian initiative of 1988. In the past months, the U.S. President Bush has committed himself to international legality, not only in the Gulf, but also in the Middle East. International legality can be applied within the framework of an "international conference" - or a "regional conference." But we do not want to negotiate about Palestinian representation, about a Palestinian delegation from inside and outside, or a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, until Bush fully commits himself to the application of 242 and 338 as it is understood by everyone but the present Israeli leaders. We can't accept the reversal of the process, that is, discussing the representation before agreeing to the international legal framework. The ball is now in President Bush's court. We asked Bush only to carry out what he already declared. So, we are not asking Bush to strike against Israel, like he did against Saddam Hussein because the Iraqi leader did not withdraw. We will be satisfied if he pressures Israel. Why should international security be held hostage by one stubborn man, Israeli Prime Minister Shamir?<sup>23</sup>

The Palestinian quarter in the centre of Kuwait City has been declared on March 25, 1991. A "closed zone" to protect its inhabitants from attacks by vindictive Kuwaiti citizens. Army troops are controlling approaches to the sections of the city populated by Palestinians, who have been accused by the Kuwaitis of collaborating with the Iraqi occupation troops. Guards have been deployed at the Iraqi occupation troops. Guards have been deployed at checkpoints throughout the city and only International Red Cross members will be allowed to visit the Palestinian quarters.

The simple truth is that no nation or government has done as good a public relations job in favour of Jordan or Palestine. And that is what the UN is all about - a talk shop in which nations must persuade the world community of the validity of their view-point. Nor is there any substance in the argument that Saddam's invasion of Kuwait was to draw the world's attention to the Arab and/or Palestinian cause. Surely the eight year war that he had earlier unleashed on Iran had nothing to do with the Palestinian cause'. But having failed to attain his objectives of seizing a part of oil-rich south-west Iran or gaining access to the sea, he turned upon Kuwait to attain the very same objectives. The linkage of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait with the Palestinian cause was quite clearly an after-thought when the US-led alliance's determination to force him out of Kuwait became absolutely manifest. It speaks volumes of our intellectuals' gullibility that

many of them have swallowed Saddam's *ex post facto* linkage of Kuwait with the Palestinian issue. And far from advancing the Arab cause by his foolish and abortive misadventure, Saddam has harmed it. Today the Arab world is divided with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Syria ranged against Iraq and Jordan. Moreover, the most powerful Arab army in West Asia has been decimated. Officials in Israel must be rubbing their hands in glee.

As for wounded Arab pride which has suffered so much humiliation during the past three decades, Saddam Hussein has rubbed salt into it by his ignominious capitulation just 100 hours after the Allied ground offensive began. In this age of global television, pictures of surrendering Arabs kneeling and kissing the hands of white American soldiers while pleading for their lives are very humiliating. Not only for Arabs but for all people in the non-white developing nations.<sup>24</sup>

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has resumed his 1988-89 peace offensive, adding what his office calls a substantial territorial concession to Israel.

In an interview with the Canadian newspaper "The Toronto Star" on March 25, 1991 Arafat said the Palestine Liberation Organisation would accept a United Nations buffer zone on the Palestinian side of the border between Israel and a future Palestinian State.

The UN troops could stay there indefinitely, he added.

Arafat's proposals are based on the position the PLO adopted at a landmark meeting of the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian Parliament-in-exile, in November 1988.

The Council accepted a solution based on a small Palestinian State living in peace along side Israel.

But the proposals add new details to reassure Israel of the PLO's peaceful intentions. Apart from the buffer zone, the PLO is offering temporary demilitarisation of the Palestinian State and possible territorial adjustments to compensate for a corridor, linking the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Arafat's proposals, as spelled out by his office in a statement today, are:

- ❑ A Palestinian State could be demilitarised for a transitional period of six months, with UN troops replacing Israeli forces.
- ❑ The issue of a corridor between Gaza and the West Bank is negotiable.
- ❑ Arafat wants Jewish members in his Cabinet and would accept Jews who wish to leave Israel and become Palestinian citizens.
- ❑ There must be compensation for Palestinian property in Israel.

- East Jerusalem should belong to Palestine, according to UN resolutions.
- Once a State is established, Palestinians and Jordanians would vote freely on the issue of confederation.
- Jewish settlers in the occupied territories must leave, according to UN resolutions.

US President George Bush proclaimed a triumphant end to the Gulf war on March 7, 1991 and set his sights on a broader peace in West Asia.

"The time has come to put an end to Arab-Israeli conflict," he said, urging compromise in the troubled region.

A hero's welcome greeted President Bush on Capitol Hill, exactly one week after he announced a conditional cease-fire in the 42-day conflict.

As commander in chief, Bush, said, "I can report to you: our armed forces fought with honour and valour. As president, I can report to the nation: aggression is defeated. The war is over."

The house chamber was awash with red, white and blue from 600 American flags as lawmakers greeted President Bush.

With Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's army driven out of Kuwait, President Bush announced the withdrawal of US troops from the Gulf. He said the first large contingent of soldiers would leave Saudi Arabia by March 7 - the 24th infantry division (mechanised) bound for Fort Stewart, Georgia. More than 537,000 US troops were sent off to war.

This is just the beginning of a steady flow of American troops coming home, Bush told a joint session of Congress in a nationally broadcast speech.

"We were coming home now proud, confident, heads high. There is much that we must do at home and abroad. And we will do it. We are Americans," President Bush said.

The speech marked a sweet moment of personal triumph for Bush. Many congressional democrats had second-guessed him throughout his seven-month showdown with Saddam Hussein, urging him not to go to war and then not to launch a ground offensive.

"Our commitment to peace in the middle east does not end with the liberation of Kuwait," Bush said.

Turning to the longstanding dispute between Israel and its neighbours, President Bush said, "differences were so painful and intractable. Yet, in the conflict just concluded, Israel and many of the Arab states have for the first time found themselves confronting the same aggressor."

By now, it should be plain to all parties that peace-making in the middle east requires compromise, the president declared. "We must do all

that we can to close the gap between Israel and the Arab states, and between Israelis and Palestinians."

A comprehensive peace must be grounded in UN Security Council resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from occupied territories and declaring the right of all nations in the region to live in peace within secure borders, Mr. Bush said.

This principle must be elaborated to provide for Israel's security and recognition, and at the same time for legitimate Palestinian political rights, he said. Anything else would fail the twin tests of fairness and security.

"The time has come to but an end to Arab-Israeli conflict," Bush said.

Meanwhile, the Gulf will top the agenda when secretary of state James A Baker visits Moscow in a week, and the postponed US-Soviet summit would not be a Kremlin priority during the talks, a Soviet spokesman has said. James Baker is to visit the Soviet Union from March 14-16, allowing considerable time for discussions, said foreign ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin in Washington.

Churkin said the principal topics of the talks would be the creation of a security system in the Gulf, the settlement of problems in West Asia and disarmament.

A solution to the strategic arms reduction treaty, which would cut about 30 per cent of the nuclear weapons in US and Soviet arsenals, has been eluding negotiators in Geneva because of technical issues over verification.

Progress is expected to depend on direct involvement of high-level officials such as James Baker and Soviet foreign minister Alexander Bessmertnykh.

"I would expect strategic arms reductions would be reviewed once again," Churkin said, "our experts are talking in Geneva but may be another look at the ministerial level would also be worthwhile, given the continued desire on both sides to accomplish that treaty without delay."

On balance, the odds are that the stalled peace process will start moving again in the near future - though at what pace and in what form remain to be seen. There can be no just and lasting settlement in the area unless tangible expression is given to the demands of the Palestinians in the occupied territories for self-determination. Instead of espousing a pro-Baghdad approach on the Gulf crisis, the PLO would have been better advised to favour the line pursued by most of the Arab states - a stand which rejected the concept of direct linkage between the Kuwait and Palestinian issues, but advocated action to resolve the larger Middle East Question once the conflict in the Gulf had ended. The adoption of such a policy

would doubtless have enabled the PLO to better exploit the opportunities of the post-Gulf war period. It is yet not too late for it to modify its general rhetoric and project a more conciliatory image. After all, it was the PLO's decision to renounce terrorism and accept the two-state solution that led the US to open a historic dialogue with it in December 1988 - direct talks which were broken off by Washington when a faction of the Organisation staged an abortive armed raid on two Tel Aviv beaches in May 1990. Another reason why the PLO should show greater flexibility is that the next few months can be expected to witness an intensification in the search for an Arab-Israeli settlement. It is also time that the PLO, for its own sake, adjusts to the reality of the power equation at the government level in the Arab world which has perceptibly shifted to in favour of the moderate regimes. Even Syria has, of late, adopted a more pragmatic tune. Buoyed with their victory, the Americans might be tempted to explore the prospects of peace with Palestinian representatives who do not belong to the PLO. However, it will be well-nigh impossible to bypass the Organisation since it commands an overwhelming following in the occupied territories and because the Arab states, too, will be against the idea. But continuing to behave as though the radicals control the politics of the region will get the PLO nowhere. True, the PLO comprises several hardline factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the PFLP-General Command, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Front which are not easy to control. But the relatively moderate Fatah faction led by Yasser Arafat is the main-line group of the PLO and he is by far the most popular leader among the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The onus is therefore, on Arafat to demonstrate considerable courage and foresight in providing decisive leadership and in keeping the radicals under check if the PLO is to take maximum advantage of the peace moves which are likely to be made in the coming months. Unfortunately, however, his track record on the subject does not provide much ground for optimism. Arafat now faced the toughest test of his entire career. Indeed, what is at stake is not just the question of his very survival as the chairman of the PLO, but also the fate of the Palestinians.<sup>25</sup>

Winds of change are blowing across the political landscape of the Middle East. The censors have scissored away pages and passages they consider objectionable. Significantly, they have snipped away a part of the page carrying short interview with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as the Iraqi Government's chief spokesman, Najj al Hadithi. In the pre-war world, the censor would have definitely cut out the voluble, right-wing Israeli entirely. Now, Netanyahu has his say

whereas Hadithi has been neatly cut out. In a small way, this illustrates the biggest change the war has brought about in the politics of the region, determined over the past 45 years solely by Arab-Israeli rivalry. The aftermath of the war has seen a shuffle of cards, causing some confusion. Saudi Arabia, the most orthodox Arab state, is almost directly advocating a rapprochement with the Israelis. The Americans seem ranged against at least what the current Israeli Government considers its interest. The Palestinians have a hard time telling friend from foe. Last fortnight, as US Secretary of State James Baker began his tour of the Middle East and the Soviet Union, there was one main point on his agenda - to bring about a solution to the Palestinian problem. In a statement that went further than all prewar expectations, President George Bush suggested to Israel that it traded territory for peace. But even as the Israelis complained bitterly, it was easy to see Bush's logic. Having won the war, the US now wants to win the peace. And the only way to win over those Arabs who fell agag-grieved by Iraq's humiliation, is to broker an accord on the Palestinians' future.

For Israel, this is a bitter moment of truth when it has just been reminded of its vulnerabilities by Saddam Hussain and when its strongest ally, the US, is demanding concessions from it. American firmness it is evident in Baker's insistence on meeting Palestinian representatives, despite Israeli protests. This leaves Israel in a no-man's land, and unless the Jewish state plays along it will risk international isolation.

James Baker cautioned Syria and Egypt not to press too hard for an immediate middle eastern peace conference. But the Americans were making it quite clear that they want movement on the Palestinian question quickly. As a senior US diplomat said: "If we lose this opportunity, we will never be able to swing it."<sup>26</sup>

There are alternative possibilities in regard to the area to be covered by the collective security arrangement. The area could be defined in geographical terms eligible to be included. West Asia could include the area stretching from Turkey the north and Egypt in the south, up to Iran (inclusive) and covering the entire Arabian peninsula. This may not be acceptable to Israel as it would be the only non-Islamic country of the region. Since Pakistan and India are littoral nations of the Arabian sea and have legitimate interests in the area they could be added along with Afghanistan. In view of Japan's vital interest in the area that could also be considered for inclusion. Some may feel that there is a case to add the Maghreb countries (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) and

Sudan. There are some basic differences in the security issues of the Maghreb and those of West Asia. However, a number of considerations favour this collective security arrangement. The Cold War is over. Though China's future behaviour is still uncertain there are reasonable prospects of the other four permanent members of the Security Council having a shared interest in the stability, security and orderly transition in West Asia. There are good chances of their agreeing to an arrangement of some degree of mutual restraint in supplying arms to the countries of the area. Their joint stand and pressure may bring together the countries of the area to join the plan. The enormous sense of insecurity among some of the states following the recent events in West Asia has created an appropriate climate for advancing this proposal at this stage. The present situation may generate the necessary momentum to explore the avenues to solve the Palestinian issue as well.<sup>27</sup>

With the guns in the Gulf going silent, the question of Palestine, the heart of the complex Middle East labyrinth, has once again become the focus of international attention. To take advantage of what some people have described as the "historic opportunity" provided by the end of the Gulf war, many countries are launching diplomatic initiatives in an effort to break the stalemate in the Mideast peace process. On March 3, 1991, in a nine-point plan for future Arab relations, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak stressed the need to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Palestinian question. In an address to a joint session of Congress on March 6, US President George Bush said challenges still lie ahead in the Middle East despite the end of the war. "We must work to create new opportunities for peace and stability in the Middle East.... We must do all that we can to close the gap between Israel and the Arab states - and between Israelis and Palestinians.... The time has come to put an end to Arab-Israeli conflict," Bush said. He added, "A comprehensive peace must be grounded in UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace." The two resolutions call for the Israeli return of the occupied Arab territories, Arab recognition of Israel and Arab-Israeli negotiation. The Security Council has made it clear in its numerous resolutions on the Middle East that the key to resolving the Middle East issue is Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories it occupied since 1967 and the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. With the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council, the conference would help to guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination. However, not one of the resolutions has been

implemented so far. For 23 years Israel has refused to withdraw from the occupied territories, in open defiance of the Security Council resolutions, and has now categorically rejected the proposed international conference. The Security Council has failed to take any action against Israel's defiance. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in a statement on March 7, welcomed the "positive elements" in Bush's speech - that the question of Palestine must be addressed on the basis of United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338.<sup>28</sup>

In a summit meeting on March 8, foreign ministers of eight Arab nations - Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates - issued the Damascus Declaration, which pointed out, "The foremost challenge to peace in the Arab region comes from the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories." The eight nations welcomed Bush's peace plan and vowed their continued efforts to seek a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict. The five North African Maghreb countries - Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia and Morocco - also held a summit meeting in the Libyan town of Ras Lanuf on March 10, at which they condemned any attempt to undermine the PLO, saying the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. US Secretary of State James Baker, in a fresh diplomatic endeavour, shuttled between Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria in the first half of March. While in Israel, he held separate talks with both Israeli officials and representatives of Palestinians living on occupied lands. Israel, however, remained as intransigent as ever. Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark and three foreign ministers of the European community also toured the region in early March to probe the possibility of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict, while France and the Soviet Union have voiced their approval for the convocation of an international Middle East peace conference. In an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said a just and immediate solution to the Palestinian problem must be found to prevent fresh conflicts from arising in the Middle East. The French foreign minister indicated that he would meet with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Paris because the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of Palestine. It is subjective and unrealistic to refuse to recognize the PLO, Dumas pointed out. He went on to say that France cares not only about the Palestinians' right to establish their own state but also about Israel's security. These are two closely linked issues, he stated, and France has steadfastly maintained that the convening of an international Middle East conference is the best method to resolve the Middle East issue. People are waiting to see that actions the United States

will take to cope with Israel's stubbornness. They hope Washington will co-operate with the Security Council to demonstrate the same determination and maintain the same standards and pace as it urged the council to do when dealing with the Gulf crisis. Zimbabwean Ambassador to the United Nations S.S. Mumbengewi told the Security Council on March 9 that history will commend the council's actions in taking four days to impose economic sanctions and five months to take military measures against Iraq when it invaded and occupied Kuwait, "but history will not forgive the council for reneging on its responsibility in other cases of occupation in the same region." Secretary-General of the United Nations Javier Perez de Cuellar said on March 9 that the world body should be responsible for arranging peace in the Middle East and that all countries have the right to voice their opinion on the issue.<sup>29</sup>

While media attention has been focused in recent weeks on the Kurdish refugee tragedy unfolding on the Turkish and Iranian borders, the United States secretary of state, James Baker, has been touring Middle Eastern capitals. His task: to bring Israel and the Arab states to the negotiating table. Baker's mission is a US response to the issue of linkage - the connection of the Gulf crisis with the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It has not been widely reported, but the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) - which suffered diplomatically as a result of apparently embracing President Saddam Hussein's cause - broadly supports Baker's diplomatic efforts. The question of linkage arose in the months leading up to the outbreak of war in the Gulf, when President Saddam Hussein attempted a number of times to solve the dispute over Kuwait by diplomatic means. The term "linkage" became part of the west's vocabulary. For President Saddam, Palestine was the Jewel in the crown of the pan-Arab cause, which he saw himself spearheading. To a degree, he was supported in this by the PLO, which were keen to direct negotiations on the Gulf into a United Nations-sponsored international peace conference on the Middle East. Diplomacy failed, however, and Kuwait was restored through six weeks of sustained military action. However, the US is now drawing up its own post-War agenda for the region, which suggests that the problem was not so much the idea of linkage, but rather President Hussein. Testifying recently before the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of the British Parliament. Afif Safieh, the PLO's London representative, said; "We are in favour of Baker's diplomacy." Indeed, Baker's strategy shows more flexibility than previous US proposals for peace in the region. In the aftermath of the October 1973 war, the then secretary of state Henry Kissinger tried to secure Arab-Israeli peace negotiations within a bilateral

framework, through the conclusion of separate peace agreements between Israel and individual Arab states.<sup>30</sup> Baker does not support the PLO's preferred option of an international peace conference, but his "twintrack" approach - that is, simultaneous Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in particular more room for manoeuvre. Baker has also made clear his impatience with the Israeli government on several occasions. Hardline Israeli housing minister Ariel Sharon, a fervent advocate of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, was snubbed during a recent visit to Washington when his opposite number in the US chose to meet him at the Israeli embassy instead of the White House. Dissatisfaction, with Israel is also increasingly apparent in the US Senate. In late April, 1991 Republican leader Bob Dole warned that Israeli intransigence might lead to substantial cuts in the annual three billion dollars in aid that Israel receives from the United States. The tension in the American-Israeli relationship - historically constituted as a strategic alliance - is sure to please the PLO. Safieh acknowledged to the British members of Parliament that "the key to peace resides in Washington," but he outlined three key areas of disagreement between the PLO and the US. First, Baker sees no role for the UN in the peace process. Traditionally, the UN Security Council has taken harsh positions on Israel's actions on the occupied territories, and its involvement in peace talks would be a boost to the Palestinians. Second, Baker has not requested European involvement. The PLO has always found a more sympathetic audience in Europe than it has in Washington, and the European Community (EC) would probably put pressure on Israel to make concessions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Baker does not envisage the participation of the PLO. Safieh acknowledges that the PLO was damaged by its perceived alignment with President Saddam. Yet, he maintains that Palestinians will not abandon the organisation; "The PLO is institution of an idea. Five million Palestinians form the base of this idea." Some commentators have argued that an internal PLO coup against Yasser Arafat's leadership might make the organisation more acceptable to the West, but Mr. Safieh rejects this. Referring to rumours that the PLO's central committee was planning to remove Arafat, Safieh said: "Yassar Arafat's leadership is very comfortable. There is no challenge taking place." The issue of Palestinian representation may be the thorniest that the US and Israel will have to face. Even though there is displeasure with the PLO's position during the Gulf crisis in most of the Arab states, breaking the previous consensus on Palestine, these governments have been reluctant to step forward as the Palestinian representative. Any attempt by Baker to bypass the PLO will therefore

have to adopt the "Jordanian option". Baker has already indicated that a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to negotiations will be acceptable, despite American anger with King Hussein over his opposition to the Gulf War. The king is now regarded by the US, and by many Israeli politicians, as a stabilising influence in the Middle East. However, whether the PLO, and particularly the Palestinian left, will accept King Hussein as their representative is another question entirely.<sup>31</sup>

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## ISRAEL AND WEST ASIA

'George be a king' his mother had admonished a British king but this George needs no such admonition: he intends to be the President and nothing, not even the all powerful. Zionist lobby can stop him from acting the President. It was extremely foolish on the part of Israel to provoke George Bush, particularly when the triumph in the desert has ensured a dizzy popularity and made certain a second term in the White House. Bush would like to crown his victory over Saddam Hussein by a peace settlement which will end the Arab-Israel conflict and solve the Palestinian problem. Americans have invested considerable time and energy: James Baker is visiting the region for the seventh time in succession in search of an elusive peace and he has persuaded and cajoled the Arabs to participate in the conference, even though Israel has attempted to impose some totally unacceptable conditions. Opportunity beckons Bush: the moment is propitious for peace: there is no countervailing power, both the Arabs and Jews are beholden to the man in the White House. Yitzhak Shamir, a shrewd and calculating politician, is perfectly aware that the changes in the strategic environment have not been in Israel's favour. There is no pressing need for America to have a strategically in the region: radicalism has ceased to be a force in the Arab world. Even Syria, whose intransigent anti-imperialist rhetoric irritated and angered Washington, has shown a willingness to accept American advice', there is no external force on whom the Arabs opposed to American imperialism can rely. Israel is unwilling to accept that it is not longer in the same strong position as before. It wants to convince the Americans that the victory in the desert owes a great deal to Israel. Had it responded to the scud attacks by Iraq, the Arabs would most probably have turned against the United States. It believed that this gives it the right to impose totally unacceptable conditions; it has demanded and

got nothing less than a veto on who should represent the Palestinians. That by itself would not have led to a confrontation with the United States but Tel Aviv came to realise that it has had been out-manoeuvred by events. A settlement will have to be based on peace for land; the occupied territories would have to be returned; without that there will be no incentive for the Arabs to reach a settlement. Tel Aviv has not the slightest intention of withdrawing from what it calls Judea and Samaria: at the moment, indeed, there is no particular reason why it should do so: no Arab power or a coalition of Arab states pose any kind of threat to it. An outright refusal to withdraw would have exposed Israel: it would have made it abundantly clear to every one, including its friends, that Israeli intransigence is the real obstacle to a settlement in West Asia. Therefore, it decided on a diplomatic ploy; it requested loan guarantees for \$ 11 billion to settle the Jews from the Soviet Union in Israel. This was a clever move; has had the United States agreed to give such a guarantee, it would have been embroiled with the Arabs who would have accused it of double dealing. The peace process would have been subverted. George Bush therefore decided to ask Congress to defer a decision on the Israeli request for 120 days in order to give "peace a chance."<sup>1</sup>

That set the fat on fire. Israel was furious at what it saw as the linking of aid to the peace process; Foreign Minister David Levy, one of the more moderate members of a cabinet not known for its moderation, declared "If the aid is condition on our accepting terms that are dangerous to our security then I would answer: we will live on breadcrust and salt." If Israel persists in its arrogant ways. It might well have to do that; for, as George Bush pointed out a little later, the United States subsidises Israel to the tune of \$ 1000 a year for every man, woman and child. Bush wanted firm guarantees that Israel would halt the settlements; Yitzhak Shamir, a former leader of the notorious Stern gang, a terrorist organisation, had no intention of accepting any linkage; aid to settle the immigrants, he said, is a humanitarian enterprise, and if the Arabs believe that the United States will put pressure on Israel, there will be no possible incentives for them to make compromises. And a little later, speaking to French Jews in Paris, he said. "Israel will never accept a choice between fidelity to its essential interests and money. Should some one try to pressure Israel to make concessions we will not hesitate for a second. The answer will always be; we will stick to our ideals and our aspirations." Shamir was confident that Bush would not dare; the Zionist lobby - the Jews are backed on the settlement issue by. Evangelical Christians - has enormous clout', it controls not only the media

but also leading politicians of both the parties and on a matter which Israel considers vital to its national interests, very few politicians would support even their President. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how a minor Israeli politician like Raharin Zeevi of Moledet party could call Bush a liar, an anti-Semite using cheap demagoguery.

Anti-Semite is the ultimate abuse and it was a call to arm for the Jews in America; a thousand pro-Israeli lobbyists immediately came into the fray to further Israel's cause. That was a mistake and Bush, with considerable experience of American politics, immediately exploited it; he became ('one loney little guy' standing up to a foreign power and its American lobbyists. And speaking at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, he warned that nothing should be done that might interfere with the prospect of peace "and if necessary I will use my veto power to prevent that from happening." The Jewish lobby was confident that it could, if necessary, mobilise two thirds of the vote to override the veto but public opinion was highly favourable to Bush and a television appearance by the President could create a permanent problem for Israel. A confrontation with the American President, in America on an issue which the President considers vital to American interests could only harm Israel; it could only lead to the growth of anti-Semitism. Sharmir neither reprimanded his colleague nor apologised for his unseemly outburst and that hardly improved his standing with the President. The American stand hardened; it wanted a freeze on settlements and Baker, during his visit to West Asia, even hinted that the annual \$ 2 billion loan to Israel will not be forthcoming if it continues to encourage settlements; and even after the 120 days deferment, what has been promised is swift action and not necessarily approval.<sup>2</sup>

The contemporary turmoil in the Arab world and the interplay of multiple forces are not sudden developments. Their genesis can be traced to the Years between 1918 and 1939 - the significant interregnum between the two world wars. If this period is known in other parts of the world as the age of rapid technological development for the Arabs it represents the emergence of Arab nationalism and angry reaction to the infamous Balfour Declaration of 1917 which threatened to carve out a Jewish state out of Arab land. These are still the two principal guiding pegs the contemporary Arab psyche, Nationalism has shown some growth in what we call the 'frontline' states, but it has yet to produce any ripple in the feudal monarchies. Secondly, taking advantage of Mr. Balfour's benevolence and Western patronage. Israel is carving out more and more areas for herself much beyond what was envisaged in the 1917 declaration. The seeds of future political developments in the Arab world were sown during World



War-I. The war saw the disintegration of the Ottoman Turkish empire and with it the birth of Arab States like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-jordan and Palestine. The old Turkish imperial order was buried in the scorching sands, the new countries, though under monarchies were also the precursors of modern nationalism. The euphoria of independence from Turkish domination was short-lived as the Arab realised that their wartime motivator, the British, were now sitting pretty over Arab lands putting up rapacious sheikhs as local rulers. It was the colonial method of exacting a price for liberating them from Turkish yoke. A system of colonial rule in the guise of mandatory trusts was imposed on the Arabs against their wishes. The dormant nationalism was bound to resurface. All over the Arab world there was resentment and soon the followers of Adib Ishaq, the founding father of Arab resurgence in the late 19th century, began operating secret societies in places like Baghdad and Damascus to not only fight the colonial overlords but also their local lackeys. Two other prominent Arab nationalists of the period, Mustafa Kamal and Sheikh Mohammed Abdou advocate complete freedom from foreign rule and establishment of democracy. In this the Egyptians took the lead as many of their intellectuals had taken advantage of modern education which inspired them with the ideas of democracy of the Western type. These forces emanating from three principal Arab cities of Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo staunchly believed that participation of the people in their own government was a prerequisite to progress. Thus we see how a splinter movement turned into a mass one.<sup>3</sup>

Here, however, we must distinguish, between the concept of nationalism as it evolved in North Africa under Egypt's guidance and the West Asian nationalism led by Syria and Iraq. Whereas Egypt did not look upon the Turks as the greater evil - rather as an ally against the British - the West Asian Arab viewed both the British and Turks as the main disease plaguing the Arab world. The year between 1919 and 1939 witnessed along with the massive growth of nationalism in Syria, and Iraq there was also slow induction of socialist ideas 1920s and '30s saw the intense expression of this nationalist fervour, much more than before World War-I. Historians point out that as late as the early years, of the Second World War the Arab movement had only two nerve centres - Damascus and Baghdad. When this ferment was on in West Asia, Egypt was evolving its own concept of "Pharaonic" nationalism meant to wrest freedom from the British. The 1936 Anglo- Egyptian treaty which gave her some independence in conducting foreign relations was a heaven-sent opportunity for the other Arab groups who now began to look up to Egypt to give new

dimensions to Arab movement. The fear of the emergence of Jewish state as enunciated in 1917 united the diverse forces in the Arab world. They realised that to carve a Jewish state out of Palestine was not only unjust but would pose for all times to come a grave threat to the Arab world. How true they were has been proved by events of the last forty years. Even in the late '30s the Bludan conference of some Arab states, the participants had stated that a Jewish state in Palestine would endanger not only Egypt but the entire Arab world. The Western imperialists ever since the conclusion of the First World War were carving up their areas of influence in the Arab world. The Balfour Declaration was the most perfidious example of carving policy or else why should they hit upon Palestine for the Jews. For thirty years prior to that, ever since Theodore Herzl propounded Zionism, the site chosen for the Jewish state was Uganda. It was simple because the British wanted a permanent thorn for the Arabs in their own backyard which still bleeds them profusely.

There are other samples of such arbitrary slicing up of territories. The last Gulf war between Iraq and the oil rich Arabs also has its genesis in the 1920s. At a meeting in a desert tent in late 1922 the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, Percy Cox, unilaterally demarcated what became the Kuwait-Iraq border. In fact, the modern borders of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were established by British imperial fiat at what became known as the Uqair Conference. It has its repercussions all over the Arab world. Not widely covered or recorded in history so meticulously were the sporadic uprisings in countries like Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Egypt during the decades between the two wars against both foreign yoke as also the concept of Israel. A unique aspect of this nationalist movement in the Arab world was that it grew to be secular in character and by the '30s Muslim and Christian Arabs were in the limelight of the struggle. Between 1920 and 1940 the movement embraced the entire Arab world. The time was therefore ripe for the establishment of a body that would in future oversee the piloting of Arab nationalism on concrete lines. It resulted in the creation of the Arab League in 1945 which was three years away from the impending birth of a Jewish state. While focusing on the creation of liberal forces in the Arab world one should not track also of the birth of reactionary entities like Saudi Arabia during this period. The British rendered all help to the founding fathers of Saudi Arabia like Iban Saud so that he would be able to consolidate his hold over the Arabian peninsula which the British knew, through their oil company research reports, would command the oil wealth of the world in the future.

The creation of Saudi Arabia in 1932 was in itself a big blow to the forces of democracy and secularism in the Arab world as the new state was totally fundamentalist guided by the tenets of Wahabism and ruled by the Shariat. If Egypt, Syria and Iraq represented newness in the Arab world. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states straddling her were created as counter-vailing forces. When we minutely analyse the moves of the Western powers in the 1920s and '30s, we will be surprised to note that for them it has paid dividends. The most glaring example being January-February 1991 Gulf war.<sup>4</sup>

Another factor was added on September 25, 1991 to the efforts of the super powers to find a solution to the West Asia crisis when Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, in an address to the UN, offered strong support for President Bush's proposal that the UN repeal its 1970 resolution equating Zionism with racism.

The resolution was one of the reasons why Israel had consistently rejected the UN as an intermediary and upholder of justice in the West Asia. With the resolution removed from the rolls, so to speak, Israel would have no excuse to place any new hurdles in the way of the proposed international West Asia peace conference, proposed for October 1991 by the US and the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State James Baker is planning another round of shuttle diplomacy aimed at securing final agreement from Israel and the Arabs on attending the peace conference.

James Baker has already made seven trips to West Asia since the end of the Gulf war in order to find agreement on the terms for holding the regional peace conference.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is committed to attending the conference irrespective of any other outstanding disputes or differences with the U.S. PLO chairman Yasser Arafat also stated categorically last week that he supported the peace conference and would do whatever was required to ensure its success.

At the Palestinian national council meeting in Algiers, PLO leaders appeared to have grasped the need to cooperate with the US administration, particularly with the memory fresh about their disastrous support for Iraq during the Gulf war.

However, the voices at Algiers were not all unanimous, George Habash, leader of the Left-Wing popular front for the liberation of Palestine, told the Council that the American plans were "a programme to bury

the Palestinian question". He added: "They are asking us to bury our cause with our own hands."

Israel has already set the condition for its presence at the conference that PLO and Arab residents of East Jerusalem should not be represented. Mr. Baker and his moderate Arab allies have suggested that the Palestinians take part in a joint delegation with Jordan and choose representatives who fulfil the Israel criteria.

It is likely that the Palestinians would agree to participate under such a formula, rather than opting out of a formal role in the negotiations. The PLO should not mind, because all the representatives who do participate would be supporters of the PLO and would not give up Arab claims to East Jerusalem.

Palestinian flexibility is also expected because of the firm line that the US administration has been taking against Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the Bush-Baker plan to delay loan guarantees worth \$ 10 billion to Israel for new housing for Soviet immigrants.

Once again the opposing sides in the Middle East seem bent on demonstrating that the quest for peace between Arabs and Israelis is the most intractable diplomatic issue in existence. No sooner is one difficulty overcome than another emerges. Inevitably, the question arises over the good faith of the contending parties. Yet, some observers profess to see promising developments in the laborious process. After his most recent talks with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, United States Secretary of State James Baker conceded that "significant differences" remained between Syria and Israel on a United Nations role and on the exact nature of the gathering. Syria insists that the United Nations be given a major role in the proposed conference. Israel is opposed. Israel is against any regional conference that has any status beyond that of a "ceremonial opening" followed by substantive bilateral negotiations between Israel and its neighbour. Syria wants full-fledged plenary meetings to have a decisive voice. Some observers, notably Israeli, say that the UN is biased and that its automatic majority of developing nations is certain to vote against Israeli interests. They point to the infamous UN General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism at the behest of Israel's Arab enemies. UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar now concedes that the resolution was a mischief-making mistake and should be repealed. The Damascus deadlock followed a major advance in the peace process when members of the Gulf Cooperation Council reversed their previous refusal and announced they would be ready to send an observer to the peace conference. The Council is made up of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain

and the United Arab Emirates. After completing a fourth visit to the area, Baker returned to Washington for an evaluation of the progress made thus far and what should come next. He said the main remaining issues are the role of the UN. Whether the conference should be reconvened if there is a deadlock in negotiations, and who should represent the Palestinians. At a joint press conference with the then Soviet Foreign Minister, Alexander Bessmertnykh in Cairo, Baker said. Nobody can impose peace on the parties. They have got to want it so they have got to find a way to come together." One of the issues complicating the peace process is what has emerged as a major programme by the government of Yitzhek Shamir to expand Jewish settlement in the occupied Arab territories including the building of 13,000 housing units, Shamir had denied that there were any such plans.<sup>5</sup>

Baker, has repeatedly called the settlements an obstacle to peace." Yassir Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, dismissed the Baker and Bessmertnykh peace mission in a speech in Lusaka (Zambia). He described it as "a conspiracy (that) is focusing on the attempt to liquidate the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause." The Intifada, the violent Palestinian uprising, will continue, he vowed. After Baker's second meeting with Palestinians from the occupied territories, a Palestinian spokesman welcomed the latest diplomatic developments. Muhammad Zaydan, spokesman for the National Committee of Arab Council Heads, called them "a step in the right direction." Observers said that a radical change has been brought to the peace process by the profound changes in Soviet policy. Said Abba Eban, former Israeli Foreign Minister. "None of us two years ago ever imagined that the Soviet Union would open the gates to Jewish emigration as well as come to the brink of renewing diplomatic ties, and also cooperate with the United States on peace efforts." Arab sources say that, since Moscow no longer is ready to back their positions automatically, it may do more harm than good. Said Radio Amman: "The Soviets are entering the Middle East arena from a position of weakness because of their internal difficulties, and therefore the Arabs cannot expect much from them when it comes to pressing the rights of the Arab nation against Israel."<sup>6</sup>

President Bush in his UN address has asked for the reversal of the UN resolution Number 3379 which castigated Zionism as a form of racism. Technically speaking the US president is right in highlighting that the objective of establishing a Jewish homeland should not be confused with continuing policies of the state of Israel. Presumably the US proposes to get the resolution rescinded and the president's reference to it in his speech

in the UN on September 23, 1991 indicates the US may have mobilised enough notes for the purpose.

Zionism was a movement started among the Jews all over the world in late 19th century when they were undergoing intense persecution in various European countries, especially Russia, Poland, Germany and eastern Europe, to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The movement was reinforced when the British government used the Balfour declaration in 1916 promising a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. A homeland is not necessarily identical with a state. It can be a province in a larger state and the population can even be a minority in its homeland. The idea of converting the Jewish homeland into the state of Israel with the Jewish community holding state power began to mature in the '20s and '30s, the Jewish population in Arab countries was not subjected to as much ill-treatment as the Jews in eastern Europe were. The racism of the Europeans drove the Jews towards the homeland concept and its translation into the Jewish state of Israel.

Jews and Arabs belong to the same racial stock - the Semitic race. The Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims share the same religious roots in the Old Testament, Israel can be accused of religious bigotry, but not of racist one in the conventional sense since the Jews are part of the larger Semitic stock.<sup>7</sup>

The UN resolution on Zionism as a form of racism was inspired by the Islamic countries. Since they are extremely vulnerable to the charge of religious bigotry themselves, they chose to charge Israel with a form of racism rather than religious bigotry. Unlike Islam, Judaism does not encourage conversion. Consequently, the Jews are believed to belong to the original Semitic stock. While believers in Islam cannot be accused of racist bigotry - since they convert people of all races to Islam - the Jews are vulnerable to this charge. That is on paper. The definition of a Jew is one born of a Jewish mother. This was a rational definition for a persecuted race to ensure its perpetuation. Consequently, the Jews of Israel and elsewhere have a lot of admixture of blood of other races. Most of the Jews of Israel are Ashkenazis with a heavy admixture of white Caucasian blood which is exhibited in their colour and features. The Jews from Arab countries and elsewhere are Sephardim Jews or eastern Jews. Within Israel there have been controversies about subtle and not so subtle discrimination against Jews who came from non-European countries. At the same time the state of Israel has made efforts to bring in and absorb such Jews of non-European origins. The latest group to be so absorbed are the Falashas from Ethiopia. India has to decide about noting on rescinding the original UN resolution

on Zionism as a form of racism from the point of view of its national interest. Unfortunately in the past, some of our diplomats have allowed emotion to get the better of regard for facts. Israel can be charged with religious bigotry, aggression and harsh treatment of its Arab minority. No doubt the UN resolution on racism (1904 of 1963) defines the term as any "distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national ethnic origin" and this definition would lend support to the charge of racism against Israel. A large number of countries can also be charged under this definition. Pakistani treatment of Muhajirs or the reservation policy of India or the affirmative action of the United States would attract the charge of racism since the latter two give preference to a group of people on the basis of descent and race respectively. The UN resolution 3379 cannot be sustained. Surely in India we would not be amused if India were to be charged with racism by some anti-Mandal people on the basis of the UN resolution on racism of 1963. That UN resolution did not include religious and secularian bigotry in its definition though they are today the widest practised form of discrimination in the world. Resolution 3379 has been counter-productive since it has earned more sympathy and support for Israel from the western countries rather than condemnation.<sup>8</sup>

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on September 30, 1991 said Israel will never give up the West Bank. Gaza and East Jerusalem or the right to settle Jews there.

Referring to American opposition to the planting of more settlements, Shamir said "settlements are not a separate problem. The settlement issue is part of the territorial issue that divides us from the Arabs. We are convinced we are the owners of these territories and this land belongs to us."

A senior official elaborating on the Prime Minister's position explained "we believe our claim (to the occupied territories) is better than theirs. If we say we will refrain from permitting Jews to take up residence there, we're in effect admitting the Arab claim is stronger than ours."

Meanwhile in Amman Jordanian Prime Minister Taher Masri has described as positive and objective the Palestinian National Council's (PNC) decision to negotiate the terms of Palestinian participation in the peace conference proposed by Washington.

By adopting decisions which could contribute to the implementation of international resolutions and the ending of the Palestinian people's suffering, the PNC has acted positively.

Linkage is back in Middle East parlance and, this time, Israel hears it from its friend and benefactor. When American President George Bush threatened to veto any Congress move to grant \$ 10 billion-loan guarantees

to Israel, he had linked the aid package to the forthcoming Middle East peace conference. Given the adamant postures of both the governments, a major showdown appeared to be on the cards. However, on seeing the Administration's determination and the wide support it mustered in the US media and among pro-Israeli circles, the Shamir government undertook a tactical retreat. Much to the chargin of the US administration, on the sixth of this month, Israel formally submitted a request for a \$ 10 billion loan guarantees spread over a period of five years. This was to enable it borrow from commercial banks at preferential rates of interest. While the financial commitment for the US is likely to be marginal, it will give Israel a longer repayment period as against its current seven-year credit rating. The amount thus generated is to be spent for the absorption of mass immigration of Soviet Jews. Out of the estimated one million immigrants, a third are already in Israel. Facing serious problems like housing and employment generation, Israel needs the assistance rather urgently. Washington, however, has serious reservation over the nature and timing of the Israeli request. Secretary of state James Baker immediately responded by saying that any favourable consideration of the request would 'undercut' the peace process. He was apprehensive of the Israeli demand on two counts. Providing guarantees to Israel, the Administration feared, would unnecessarily alienate the Arabs. The assistance might even provide a pretext for their rejection of the peace conference. Second, settlements are an impediment to the peace process and the Bush administration intends to use every means at its disposal to freeze settlement activities in occupied territories. Mr. Baker's recent success in obtaining Arab consent to suspend the boycott of Israel if the latter stops settlements did not elicit a favourable response from Shamir. On the contrary, every time Mr. Baker visits the region, housing minister Ariel Sharon springs yet another new programme. Moreover, the US is not very happy with its earlier experience over loan guarantees. While securing a \$ 400 million assistance in October last year, Israel had promised that no part of the guarantees would be diverted to the occupied territories. Yet the US strongly believes, and rightly so, that the guarantees had helped Israel to release some additional grants towards settlement activities. Given the pace at which new and additional housing is coming up on the West Bank, the charge is justifiable.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, after cautious reactions in the beginning the Administration had decided to ask the Congress to delay the approval by 120 days. While President Bush was unwilling to promise action after the deferral period, he added that "cost to Israel associated" with the delay will be "offset in the ultimate package". Making an emotional plea to Congressmen, he argued: "Too much is at stake to let domestic politics take precedence over peace." Israel and its friends in Congress felt differently.

The request was originally made in January this year when US under-secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger visited Israel following the Scud attacks. Denying Israel's request to write off its debts, the US agreed to give \$ 650 million to defray the cost incurred by Israel in the Gulf war. As part of the deal, the Jewish state agreed to delay any new aid requests by six months. Therefore, for Israel the President's move was unacceptable. Further, the attempt to link loan guarantees - a humanitarian issue - with the peace process - a political issue - was not looked at kindly either in Israel or by the Congress. Linking loan guarantees to construction activities in occupied territories is more acceptable to a large segment in the US legislatures as well as a significant proportion of the Israeli public. On the contrary, by bringing in the peace process into the picture, the Bush Administration had increased the stakes. Guarantees were now made conditional upon Israel's 'behaviour'. In asking for a four-month delay, the administration had indirectly put a time framework for progress. Given the fact that elections are due both in the US and Israel towards the end of next year, this deadline assumes significance. This move undoubtedly increases American leverage vis-a-vis the Arabs in general and the Palestine Liberation Organisation in particular. By projecting itself as an honest broker in the peace process, Washington hopes to secure some tangible results in resolving the prolonged conflict. With the demise of the Soviet empire, such an even-handed approach has been more than welcomed in Arab capitals. If one takes a broader view of the question, the origin and subsequent escalation of the confrontationist attitude between the two countries can be traced to the absence of personal chemistry between President George Bush and Prime Minister Yitzhak Sharmi. While Mr. Bush perceives Mr. Shamir as an obstacle to Middle East peace, the latter considers Mr. Bush to be anti-Israel. Every new development only aggravated the situation and the Gulf war heightened the tension. The present controversy is part of the same trend. This confrontationist attitude was not without dangerous fallouts. Should Mr. Bush go ahead and successfully veto any proposal to provide assistance, the American ability to influence Israel during the peace conference would have been seriously eroded. On the other hand, if Mr. Bush were to retreat, the USA's role as a mediator and sponsor of the peace conference would have been questioned. Mr. Shamir's retreat from the earlier adamant position of pursuing the issue of loan guarantees has saved both the leaders from unnecessary embarrassment. The truce, however, is only temporary.<sup>10</sup>

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## AMERICA, ISRAEL AND INDIA

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The war in the Gulf ended in March 1991 but very little seems to have changed in that region. There is no end in sight to the malaise in West Asia. The problems both political and socio-economic, remain as intractable as before. Yet, unless the fundamental problems are addressed, America's victory will remain pyrrhic, and as one Western journalist has put it, Robert Southey's lines about "The Battle of Blenheim" will apply to the Gulf crisis: And everybody praised the Duke/Who this great light did in win./ "But what good came of it at last?" / Quoth little what good came of it at last? / "Quoth little Peterkin" / Why, that I cannot tell," said he, / "But was a famous victory." Victory it had to be, because unparalleled power was ranged on one side. Three of the world's top armies, those of the US, Britain and France, supported by three of the best military machines in West Asia, those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, were pitted against a country whose population did not exceed that of the Netherlands and whose GNP equalled only that of Portugal. No doubt, American nationalism had a triumphant rise and to use President Bush's words "we saw the excellence embodied in the Patriot missile and the patriots who made it work." But many perceptive Western thinkers and writers are pointing out the danger of allowing patriotic escapism to excuse a national unwillingness to face up to the West Asian realities. West Asia continues to be one of the most turbulent regions of the world. The West may have just earned some more time through its overwhelming victory before another explosion occurs there, for all the ingredients making for an explosion remain in place.<sup>1</sup>

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said in an interview that the US proposal for West Asia peace talks was sidestepping the basic rights of Palestinians.

Arafat said on July 25, 1991 the United States appeared ready to steamroll the peace process according to its own designs because it thought the Arab world had been defeated in the Gulf war.

"We are watching the American-Israeli designs which completely conceal the subject of Jerusalem and which abort completely the Palestinian people's national and political rights" Arafat said.

Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yassar Arafat said in a broadcast on July 28, 1991 that he was ready for peace with Israel.

"When they are ready (to make peace), I am ready", Arafat told Sky Television when asked if he had a message for US secretary of state James Baker and Israel.

In Cairo, a senior PLO official said Palestinians would shun proposed middle east peace talks without a formal invitation to the PLO.

Arafat said: "Who will form the Israeli delegation? The Israeli government. Who will form the Egyptian delegation? The Egyptian government. The Syrian delegation? The Syrian government. Except the Palestinians. We are not human beings." He said the proposed talks meant little without PLO participation.

"No talks with the PLO, Okay, with whom are they going to make peace? This means it is not a peace? This means it is not a peace, it is a settlement, a temporary settlement."

However, a report from Jerusalem said Israel failed on July 28, 1991 to meet Washington's request to accept west Asia peace talks before a US-Soviet summit meeting this week in Moscow.

"We're prepared to go to a peace conference, to talk; but we have a few questions the Americans promised to answer and we're checking with them", Israeli religious affairs minister Avner Shaki told reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting.

Israel wants talks with Palestinians on its terms - without the PLO which it calls a terrorist group or Arabs from east Jerusalem, the Palestinian political centre annexed after its capture by Israel in 1967.

US president George Bush, hoping to announce a peace conference at his Moscow meetings with president Mikhail Gorbachev, had sought an Israeli response by on July 29, according to Bush's national security adviser.

It's not a deadline", adviser Brent Scowcroft with Scowcroft said on July 26. "It's a hope, because the US and the Soviets will be cosponsors of

any conference, and it would be useful to have an Israeli response before we get there".

Shaki said "Israel has in principle said yes but this yes is conditioned by the Palestinians not being from east Jerusalem and not being PLO, that's all."

Political sources said the cabinet agenda barely touched on west Asia peace efforts. Shaki said afterwards they believed the issue of east Jerusalem would be resolved in a few days. Israel insists there is no American deadline. Immigration minister Yitzhak Peretz said that because of outstanding problems, "I don't believe we can at this time give a definitive answer".

Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres was quoted on July 28 as saying Palestinians from East Jerusalem should be allowed to take part in the talks.

"If an American votes in Paris in US presidential elections, that does not mean Paris has, or is going to, become his capital city". Peres told the French weekly *Le Journal Du Dimanche*.

Israel has said it will only respond to US proposals for the talks - already accepted by its arch-foe Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudia Arabia and the Gulf states - after the make up of the Palestinian delegation is clear.

Saddam Hussein's role in the Gulf war has left in its wake a sense of Big Powers' obligation to help resolve some of the Middle East's long-standing problems. One problem high on President George Bush's list of priorities is the Arab-Israeli conflict. As he told a joint session of Congress on March 6, 1991, "the time has come to put an end to (the) Arab-Israeli conflict." Nonetheless, the Gulf war was fought to liberate Kuwait, not to solve the Palestinian problem. Although Iraq repeatedly attacked Israel with Scud missiles, Israel was not a belligerent in this war - at American insistence. Moreover, Hussein's threats to destroy Israel and his attacks on the Jewish state were fully supported by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinians in the occupied territories. This undermined what little trust had remained between Israelis and Palestinians. Nor has the war produced a new leadership on either side of the conflict capable of transforming the constituency-led politics of the past decade into the heroic politics of Anwar el-Sadat and Menachem Begin. It is therefore not clear that this war has made the Arab-Israeli conflict any more amenable to solution. The opportunities for peace must be defined before new ideas for advancing the process can be developed. First, the defeat of Saddam Hussein represents the defeat of his world view. He had promoted the



vision of a Hussein-led, Pan-Arab superpower to counter American dominance of the post-Cold War world. He tried to give new credibility to the pre-Sadat method of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict - by threatening to destroy Israel. The war had the important side-benefit of discrediting this approach.<sup>2</sup>

The war also shifted the balance of power in the Arab world decisively in favour of the Egyptian-Saudi coalition that fought alongside the United States. Egypt and Saudi Arabia not only emerged from the crisis as winners, but also solidified their bilateral relations with a new bargain whereby Egyptian troops will help provide security for the Gulf Arabs in return for money to stabilize the Egyptian economy. The devastating blow to radical Arab forces has left Syria, for the time being, with little alternative to staying with the winning coalition. The end of the Cold War cost Damascus its super-power patron: The Soviet Union has only been prepared to supply weapons for "defensive sufficiency," and President Mikhail Gorbachev has lectured Syrian leader Hafez al-Asad on the need to make peace with Israel, warning that Moscow would not support any Syrian military efforts to resolve the conflict. At the same time, the Gulf crisis has solidified U.S. - Israeli strategic ties, enhancing Israel's deterrent posture toward Syria. The defeat of Hussein also destroyed, for now, any Damascene dream of an eastern-front coalition (Iraq, Jordan, and Syria) capable of challenging Israel on the battlefield. As long as Egypt remains at peace with Israel and Iraq's offense is not rebuilt, Syria cannot contemplate waging a war on its own. The battlefield victory of Western technology over Soviet weaponry should also give al-Asad pause as he calculates the Syrian-Israeli military balance. Stepped-up American-Israeli efforts to upgrade the Patriot anti-missile system and the Arrow anti-tactical ballistic missile should deflate Syrian hopes of holding Israel's civilian population hostage to stave off a battlefield defeat. On the other hand, joining the coalition has already paid Syria dividends in the form of a free hand in Lebanon and Saudi financial aid. By enabling the coalition to engage in the peace process, Damascus can ensure that it becomes the focus of American diplomacy. Indeed al-Asad's assessment of the United States as the dominant power in the Middle East requires him to approach the Bush administration with new flexibility. But the United States also needs Syrian cooperation on postwar security arrangements and for a meaningful peace process. Syrian opposition to American efforts in either arena could complicate policy, providing al-Asad with some leverage in building the relationship he now seeks with Washington. These trends suggest that inter Arab politics is likely to be

dominated for the foreseeable future by the new axis of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria - the largest, the richest, and the most nationalistic Arab states, respectively. This is an unassailable coalition should it decide to settle with Israel. However, whether this is in fact a dominant axis, rather than a triangle of tension, remains unclear. Saudi Arabia has a very modest conception of the Egyptian and Syrian roles in Gulf arrangements with the United States. For their part, Egypt and Syria are competitors for American attention and in their roles in the peace process. Cairo may feel it necessary to rehabilitate PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat; Damascus wants to remove him from PLO leadership. And whether the capacity of these three Arab powers to make peace is matched by a willingness to come to terms with the Jewish state remains to be tested. Still, there are some new reasons for cautious optimism. First, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait demonstrated to the Gulf Arab states that they had more to fear from regional radicalism than from Israel. Second, Israel's unexpected exercise of restraint in the face of Iraqi provocation demonstrated to the Gulf states that the Likud government is capable of acting rationally and, some aver, even wisely. Third, Egypt and Saudi Arabia should have a strong incentive to show the Arab world that they are better able to secure Palestinian rights through peace with Israel than Saddam Hussein could with his threads of destruction. And finally, Israel and Kuwait now share an antipathy for the Palestinians in general and the PLO in particular and, having recently regained their country, Kuwaitis are less inhibited about breaking taboos. It is doubtful that the Palestinians share this same sense of realism and shared interests with Israel. Most Palestinians are bitter and frustrated with their mistaken dependence on yet another failed pan-Arab "hero". Arafat is responsible for committing the PLO to the Iraqi camp before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but his move was strongly endorsed by the Palestinian people. They were led astray, but they willingly followed. The Gulf Arabs do not sympathize with the Palestinians' choice. Gulf aid will not be restored soon and large number of Palestinian workers may be forced to leave the Gulf and return to Jordan and the West Bank. The Palestinian national movement will probably be in disarray for the foreseeable future a mid score-settling and challenges to leadership. The most significant repercussion for Arab-Israeli diplomacy is that the leading Arab states no longer insist on PLO representation in the peace process. Since the beginning of 1991, Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf states have pointedly omitted any reference to the PLO in their joint communiqués. Arab state insistence on PLO involvement in the peace process and Israel's refusal to deal with the PLO have created a major roadblock to progress over the last decade. This sea change in Arab

state attitudes offers potential for a breakthrough on the issue of Palestinian representation. This PLO setback may combine with the impact of the intifada to shift decisively the balance of power in the Palestinian national movement from the head-quarters in Tunis to a local leadership in the territories that would be more responsive to the local population. The decision of the local leadership to meet Secretary of State James Baker in April 1991 and break their own boycott on contacts with U.S. officials is the first manifestation of this potential. But if it is to be successfully developed, it will require the full cooperation of the Arab states. Those in the Gulf seem prepared to lend their support to the process, and Egypt and Syria are also willing to give the local leadership their backing for the moment. King Hussein views the resuscitation of the PLO as a vehicle for Jordan's reentry into the peace process. That reentry has become a priority for Amman in its quest for rehabilitation in Arab and American eyes. But King Hussein is too weak and dependent on Palestinian sentiment to replace the PLO as spokesman for the Palestinians. Instead, he is likely to take advantage of the PLO's weakness to bolster his own efforts at reengagement.<sup>3</sup>

There is reason to expect new Israeli flexibility in the peace process as well. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has emerged from the crisis with his leadership strengthened and his relationship with George Bush reestablished. He apparently sees a golden opportunity to engage the Arab states in a peace process while the PLO is weak and Israel enjoys new popularity in the United States and Europe. Moreover, the desire of the U.S. - led coalition to move on the peace process put Shamir in the catbird seat since there can be no progress without Israel's cooperation. This became apparent soon after the Gulf war, when proposals for a U.N. - sponsored international conference were dropped because of Shamir's opposition. With the pressing priority of raising some \$35 billion to absorb about a million Soviet Jewish immigrants, Shamir has good reason to cultivate the United States and its Western allies. The near complete destruction of Iraq's offensive capabilities has also provided Israel with some breathing space in the military arena and an opportunity to prevent a new round of the arms race that it can no longer afford. All these factors ought to renew Israeli interest in starting negotiations. But the war did nothing to shift Israeli attitudes on substantive issues. A public opinion poll taken after the war revealed an Israeli polity still deeply and evenly divided on territorial compromise. And a Likud-led coalition government of right-wing and religious parties is certainly no more willing to relinquish the West Bank. Israeli flexibility, therefore, will depend on an offer of genuine peace and acceptance of the Jewish state by the Arab states; such an offer

would bolster Israel's sense of security within the region, thereby encouraging Israel to make a serious offer to the Palestinians. A key bearing the PLO's name could not open any Israeli door - all have been sealed shut by PLO endorsement of Saddam Hussein's threats against Israel. Rather, Arab states will need to support Palestinian interlocutors in the territories for an Israeli-Palestinian negotiation. How the United States exploits this opportunity will be crucial to achieving a breakthrough. America has emerged from the Gulf war as the dominant power in the Middle East. All the powers in the region and all the interested parties outside the region are looking to Washington for leadership. The Arab Gulf States, in particular, will likely be responsive to U.S. peace process requirements. Egypt wants to play the role of strategic partner in the region. Syria is also keen to build relations with what it regards as the only super-power. And Israel seeks coordination with Washington to craft a process that meets its requirements. In these circumstances, the United States now has a stronger hand in influencing the peace process than at any time since the disengagement agreements of the 1970s. And this influence is enhanced by Bush's tremendous authority, following what is seen in the region as his personal victory over Saddam Hussein. But expectations of the United States are as high as its new reputation. In particular, the Arab states have come to believe that if the United States can liberate Kuwait in such short order, it is equally capable of liberating Arab lands occupied by Israel. And Israel's restraint during the Gulf war is generally viewed by Arabs as the result of American pressure rather than as Israeli forbearance. The president's March 6 speech to Congress, with its emphasis on "territory for peace" and its assertion that "in the modern age, geography cannot guarantee security," was welcomed in the Arab world as an indication that the United States was now preparing to deliver Israel. The President's 91 per cent popularity rating in March 1991 is cited as evidence that he is no longer beholden to domestic political constraints. In short, the Arab states are tempted to sit back and wait while Washington orders Israel out of the territories. And there is a similar urge to return to business as usual in inter-Arab politics as each power seeks to carve out new areas of influence in the Gulf and the PLO. Meanwhile, in the West Bank and Gaza, the cycle of Palestinian-Israeli violence could quickly sour the atmosphere between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In the absence of clear leadership from Washington, the window of opportunity will probably close rapidly. Conversely, if the United States takes the lead, it cannot hope to impose a solution unilaterally, but it may well be able to get the process of negotiations started. But they will need strong encouragement from Washington to take these steps. The key to progress lies in quick exploitation of the opportunity that exists. The Gulf crisis has not moved the parties to narrow their differences on the substantive issues. The

Arab states still demand complete Israeli withdrawal from the territories and the Palestinians demand an independent state. Israel demands secure borders, rejects an independent Palestinian state, and will not make a commitment to withdrawal before negotiations begin.

Nevertheless, the war has generated some new flexibility on both sides on procedural issues. First, the Arab states appear willing to accept the proposition that they, too, have to make peace with Israel through direct negotiations; an Israeli-Palestinian negotiation alone will not suffice. The willingness of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to demonstrate their acceptance of Israel through confidence-building steps such as ending the secondary boycott, renouncing the U.N. "Zionism is Racism" resolution, and joining Israel at the negotiating table could help get the process started.<sup>4</sup>

Second, Israel has indicated a willingness to attend a regional conference under the joint auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union as an opening for direct negotiations. This proposal comes very close to the Arab insistence on reconvening the 1973 Geneva conference. It might provide enough of the flavor of a multilateral conference to be acceptable to the Arab states and yet remain enough of a direct negotiation to appeal to Israel.

Third, the perennial problem of Palestinian representation might be more solvable in the post-Gulf war environment. Previously, Israel would not sit with the PLO, and the Palestinians would not come to the table without PLO authorization. The Arab states also insisted on a PLO presence in the negotiations. Now, with the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, and Syria no longer designating the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" and with the severing of financial support for the PLO, a consensus might emerge for Arab state-backed Palestinian interlocutors from the West Bank and Gaza. This is a potentially decisive development. The Arab states created the PLO in 1964. A decade later at the Rabat summit they denied Jordanian claims to represent the Palestinians. From that time on, Arab state support has gone to the PLO and has been crucial for securing international legitimacy for that organization. If they are now prepared to back an alternative leadership in the territories and act as its custodian in negotiations with Israel, it may be possible to cut the Gordian knot on the Palestinian representation issue. Further, the Palestinians in the territories seem willing to take up this leadership role and the Israeli government has encouraged them by lifting some repressive measures in the territories and allowing indigenous Palestinian economic initiatives. This process of empowering a Palestinian leadership in the territories can develop quickly if it enjoys the backing of

the Arab states and the disengagement of Israel. The ground is fertile in the West Bank and Gaza because of the PLO's failure to advance Palestinian interests through its position on the Gulf crisis, its loss of Arab and international support, and the worsening Palestinian economic situation with 70,000 newly unemployed who lost work in Israel or the Gulf. This process will increasingly pressure the PLO to choose between blocking or retroactively authorizing local Palestinian political and economic initiatives. If the larger peace process between Israel and the Arab states gets underway, the PLO will be hard-pressed to prevent local Palestinian engagement and will be more likely to repeat its recent practice of blessing a process it no longer controls. The essential ingredient in this new recipe for Palestinian representation, however, is American leadership. Without a clear indication that Washington favors local representatives and is not interested in inserting the PLO into the local process, the Arab states are likely to pursue their own PLO agenda. But if the United States continues to reject unambiguously a PLO role, Arab anger with the PLO combined with desire to please the United States will likely lead to support for this alternative process. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and even Syria are tending in this direction already. King Hussein of Jordan, having no love for the PLO, has more interest in participating in the process than in insisting on PLO engagement. This combination of American influence, Arab state engagement, Israeli procedural flexibility, and the potential empowerment of Palestinian leadership in the territories suggests that the time is auspicious for negotiations. Naturally, the negotiating road will be arduous. It is, arrangement between Israel and a Palestinian delegation for Palestinian self-government in the territories. But, inevitably, there will be efforts, especially by Palestinian rejectionists, to subvert the process with terrorism. Finding common ground between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights will also be difficult, but progress may be possible in southern Lebanon instead. King Hussein of Jordan has an interest in the peace process if only to prove his value to the United States, but the current anti-American and continued anti-Israeli sentiments of his own people will make it difficult for him to move. The demands of the rightwing coalition will limit the Israeli government's negotiating position. And inter-Arab politics is likely to bedevil any effort to concert an Arab-state approach. In short, negotiations may very well come to naught. But every now and again in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict a moment of opportunity arises when the concerns of the parties overlap, if only slightly. The Gulf war has created such a moment. With American leadership, skill, and determina-

tion, a negotiating process can begin. It may be one small step, but in the Middle East it would constitute a major breakthrough.<sup>5</sup>

That the Palestine problem is singularly the most important issue in the Arab world is indisputable. The political, social, and psychological development of the Arab people is linked to justice for the Palestinians. Nothing exercises the Arab mind more, and at the same time nothing symbolises the importance of this ancient civilisation than does Palestine. Ludicrous the suggestion may seem, it appears that the Arabs will compromise on the question of Palestinian representation, as well. That, if only for the sake of getting a conference off the ground. Israel insists that no Palestinian from East Jerusalem (under Israeli occupation since 1967) be part of the delegation. Given the central role of Jerusalem in the cultural, social and political life of Palestinians this certainly makes for a strange demand. This is an indirect way of getting Palestinians amenable to the Israeli position to be nominated as delegates, for example, people like Elias Freij and Rashad Shawa. The most prominent Palestinians in the occupied territories come from Jerusalem - such as Sari Nusseibah, Feisel al-Husseini, Ms Hannan Ashrawi and Hanna Siniora, amongst others. In all likelihood there will be a compromise on this issue, because none are as keen to get peace talks under way as are Palestinians living under Israeli occupation and they will not be obstinate. Until two years ago the same Palestinians were confident of time being on their side - by simply playing the demographic game. But now, their perceptions have undergone a significant shift. But now, owing to changes in the US Immigration classification of Soviet Jews as migrants rather than refugees, the Palestinians are not so sure. The rapid, and large, influx of Soviet Jews is tipping the demographic scales in Israel's favour. After the conference was given the go-ahead by all parties, Israel announced the construction of yet another settlement, at Eshkalot. Already in possession of more than half the land area of the West Bank, Israel will continue to expropriate land from Palestinian agriculturists. Soviet Jews will be settled there, therefore, the need to retain control over the Jordan river. For the drier Galilee region, the only affordable option is River Litani which Israel already control through its self declared 'security zone' in south Lebanon. Territorial concessions are, therefore, not in Israel's economic interests. Strategic considerations have long since been made redundant by the proliferation of missile technology in West Asia, UN resolutions 242 and 338, which form the basis of the proposed peace conference, mention the return of "territories" rather than "the territories". Subtleties such as these make a world of difference to diplomats in the process of bargaining for land. At the same

time a "just solution to the refugee problem" is the only reference to Palestinians in resolutions 242 and 338. By itself this is an insufficient and unjust reference to a people grossly wronged. But, with the predicament they find themselves in, the Palestinians have little choice. Their only viable international ally, USSR, in the process of colossal re-structuring, is made insular by the very dynamics of change of such proportions. In sum, the PLO strategy will be to insure that it retains a modicum of influence in the conference; if only to keep itself in the picture, for the future. The conference is supposed to break up into sub-committees and keep the dialogue going. This is when external forces once again come into play.<sup>6</sup>

While presenting its budget for the next year, the Bush administration is also expected to consider Israel's request for a \$ 10 billion housing loan - for its Soviet immigrants. The timing coincides with that of the conference, and is certain to be viewed as the litmus test for US intentions. The Israeli and US governments also face elections later next year. And it is all up to speculation as to how far the two can stretch themselves before the factor of constituents comes in. The three previous attempts at convening a peace conference were scuttled by happenings in Lebanon. The Lebanese civil war of 1975, the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon in 1978 and then Israel's 'Operation Peace for Galilee' in 1982 worked at putting an end to diplomatic activity. And now, for the first time since April 1975, the Lebanese state is beginning to establish its authority in areas outside Ba'abda. With moral and material support from Damascus, Beirut has moved its troops all over the country. They face Israeli soldiers in the south, and in July there was an exchange of fire with Israeli aircraft. On previous occasions, honesty of purpose was put to test in Lebanon and given the stakes a repeat performance is always a likelihood in Lebanon, in whatever form.<sup>7</sup>

Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat has come out sharply against the US-sponsored West Asia peace conference scheduled next month saying that several things concerning the Palestine issue remains unresolved.

Speaking in Tunis, on September 22, 1991 Arafat said the proposed conference was silent on the question of Palestinian right to self-determination and their homeland.

Arafat's criticism of the proposed West Asia peace conference comes a day after three Palestinian groups had rejected it in Damascus saying that the conference was aimed at dividing the Palestinian people.

Arafat said he could not understand why Palestinian representatives could not attend the peace conference.

Meanwhile, US secretary of state James A. Baker has said that the United States is prepared to sponsor a West Asia peace conference with or without the Palestinians.

At a news conference with King Hussein of Jordan on September 19, 1991 Baker said, "if the Palestinians once again pass up an opportunity, there is nothing we can do about it."

King Hussein said he hoped the Palestinians would realise the time is short. "This opportunity may not come again."

The Jordanian king, whose country's population is about half Palestinian, said that any Palestinian participating in the peace conference were expected to do so as part of the Jordanian delegation.

In a letter to Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, Baker said Washington believed that Israel should not be forced to negotiate with any delegation of which it disapproved.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat on September 24, 1991 threw his weight behind US efforts to organise a Middle East peace conference. Arafat told the first meeting of the Palestinian parliament-in-exile in three years that he was ready to cooperate with "all the parties" to "lift obstacles" to the conference. But he faces strong opposition from hardliners, who dismiss the US conference plan as a sell-out.

Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the hardline faction of the divided Syrian-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), said shortly before the opening session that he rejected US secretary of state James Baker's conference proposals because they did not respond to the minimum Palestinian rights. "I will ask the PNC to reject any policy which is not clear and which gives room for interpretation," he said.

Arafat, who arrived in Algiers on September 22, 1991 termed the meeting of Palestine National Council (PNC), as the Parliament is officially known, "a decisive point in the history of the Palestinian cause."

The Palestinians must say "yes" or "no" to attending the conference, which Baker has been trying to organise for next month and Israel's Arab neighbours have agreed to attend.

Israel has said it will attend under certain conditions. These include a refusal to meet any PLO representatives or residents of Arab east Jerusalem, which it seized in the 1967 Middle East war and later annexed.

Arafat's aides said he hoped his announcement of PLO willingness to remove obstacles to the conference would bring guarantees for the Palestinians' legitimate rights. He planned to appeal to US president George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev - whose countries are

jointly sponsoring the conference - to "facilitate" Palestinian participation, they added.

A Palestinian delegation will soon meet US secretary of state James Baker to discuss Palestinian participation in the proposed Middle East peace conference a PLO spokesman said today. The meeting will take place within a few days in New York or Washington, Mr. Ahmed Abderahmane told reporters in Algiers. He said the delegation members would be Faisal Hussein and Hanan Ashrawi.

Amnesty International has said that the "odds are stacked against" Palestinian civilians getting a fair trial in military courts in the Israeli occupied territories because of fundamental flaws in the system - including the torture or ill-treatment of suspects during interrogation.

The London-based human rights organisation on July 30, 1991 expressed serious concerns about the entire process right from the time a suspect is arrested to when the case is eventually closed - under which thousands of Palestinian civilians are tried every year. Some have been tried every year. Some have been tried for non-violent political acts such as raising the Palestinian flag.

In releasing its report about the trials of civilians in these military courts, the organisation said one of its key criticisms was the long period people spend in incommunicado detention after arrest.

People can be held in prisons or police stations for up to 18 days without being brought before a judge and their lawyers and relatives are often not allowed to see them for much longer periods - which created conditions for both arbitrary arrest and torture or ill-treatment.

"There is clearly a pattern of torture or ill-treatment in Israel and the occupied territories", Amnesty International said.

"Detainees are systematically hooded with dirty sacks and deprived of food or sleep, usually by being shackled in painful positions, while held in solitary confinement.

They are also frequently beaten all over their bodies, including on their genitals and held in rooms so small and dark which detainees call "confinns" or ones so cold that they are called "refrigerators". This is done to punish or to extract information or confessions, the report said.

"What's extremely disturbing is that there are actually secret official guidelines allowing moderate physical pressure" during interrogation. Amnesty International said. These guidelines were initially formulated by a commission of inquiry into interrogation practices headed by Justice Moshe Landau and endorsed by the government in 1987.

"We believe either that the government endorses these interrogation practices. Which amount to torture or ill-treatment, or that interrogators have been routinely violating official guidelines as well as international standards which prohibit all torture and ill-treatment". Amnesty International said.

"Either way, the government needs to urgently address the problem, including by publishing the secret guidelines."

Concerns about torture and ill-treatment are closely tied to the fairness of trials, since confessions are often the main evidence against defendants and Judges appear reluctant to investigate claims of coerced statements.

In many cases, Judges and prosecutors place improper pressure on people to plead guilty in exchange for a lesser sentence so that trials end as quickly as possible.

An Amnesty International delegate who observed military court trials in the occupied territories witnessed a graphic illustration of such problems during a trial in Hebron (Al- Khalil) in November 1990.

A young man, charged with throwing stones, was brought into court with obvious injuries suggesting he had been tortured - his shirt was torn and bloody, there were open wounds on his left arm and chest and his right thigh was black and blue with bruises.

He claimed he had confessed because he was beaten and kicked, yet the Judge said he was only interested in finishing the case that day and if the defendant agreed he would get a lighter sentence.

Israeli arrogance and isolation, the pathetic conditions of the Palestinians and the problem of their homeland, occupation of Arab lands and Arab authoritarianism - all these and there other critical problems of the region have not been lessened one iota. US Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker's "viceregal" trips to West Asia have so far yielded miniscule results. The progress towards holding of an international peace conference on West Asia continues on a tortuous path beset by the implacable hostility of Israel. The peace conference would finally take place, but it would more likely be immediately deadbolt by Israeli obdurance and the American indulgence of it. On the other hand, Israel goes ahead with the illegal settlement of Jewish immigrants in occupied territories. Nor is Israel any more willing than before to trade territory for peace or to give up occupation of the Palestinian-populated West Bank. It is now virtually universally recognised that these two problems constitute the heart of the malaise in West Asia, and without their resolution peace would remain an elusive goal. Israel's abuse of human rights and the rule of law is now notoriously apparent. It has been veiled by the legal rhetoric of its apologists, shoved

under the all-inclusive umbrella of "right of self-defence", and the propaganda about Israel as an open, democratic society. It is resembling more and more the ancient Roman society, where there was one law for the citizens and quite another for the slaves. The conduct towards the Jewish citizens is used to obfuscate the brutal conduct towards the non-Jewish population, particularly towards the Arab population of the West Bank. Israel has committed grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, imposed collective punishments, murdered some 700 Palestinians in the last three years, including a number of boys aged 16 or younger, carried out illicit internment under illicit conditions, exiled or deported some 2,000 Arab citizens and denied the elementary political rights to the Arabs in the territory under its control. To these critical political problems may be added the socio-economic malaise in the Arab region. Almost all the Arab countries are being ruled by small cliques or clans who appropriate to themselves the surplus produced by the people and by the oil resources, leaving the great majority in conditions of deprivation.<sup>8</sup>

After the American victory over Iraqi forces the Washington-friendly Arab regimes have been hopeful that President Bush would change the administration's policy on Palestine. The chief spokesperson of this lobby told the NAM meeting in Accra (Ghana) that time had come for the settlement of Arab-Israel dispute and the opportunity should be availed. He was referring to what, in his perception, is the new US policy in West Asia.

The recent announcement of President Bush that he would overrule the Senate resolution for \$ 10 billion support to Israel if the latter did not respond to the call for a Peace Conference in October to be jointly chaired by America and the Soviet State. The Press has gone to town with the statement as if it is a radical departure from the last stance. Newspaper headlines speak of the US taming Israel.

The euphoria however has no foundation in reality. The Bush proposal to postpone, not abandon, the release of \$ 10 billion loan to Tel Aviv is mere cosmetics. This amount is not a part of the hefty regular subsidy that Israel gets from Washington. It is additional to that meant for building dwelling units for the Russian immigrants who have been pouring in since April 1990 when Moscow changed its policy on Jewish immigration.

Over the last 16 months Israel has built 15,780 dwellings in the occupied lands and the Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has declared his intention to build as many more. In other words, Tel Aviv intends to strengthen its grip over territories grabbed in the 1967 war rather than preparing to return them to the Arab neighbours in order to have peace. Mr.



Baker's peace moves have not found any appreciation, much less enthusiasm, in Israel circles.

This attitude is adopted at a time when there is no insistence on inclusion of the PLO representatives in the proposed peace talks. This is not a betrayal only of the long-suffering Palestinians but also of the NAM which has all along been taking a position that PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

It is a curious aspect of the Arab politics that while the regimes are most vociferous about demanding world support against Israel in the name of Palestinians they are less than enthusiastic about giving political, moral and diplomatic support to PLO which alone has been able to demonstrate capacity to militarily challenge the Israel might. The support that PLO leadership extended to Saddam Hussein in the recent Gulf war has come handy to them for externalising their inherently anti PLO attitude. They would like to weaken it even as Washington seeks to break the Iraqi strength. Hopes attached with the Peace Conference on Middle East may well turn into dupes.

Why was US Secretary of State James Baker's reaction so low-key on hearing that the Palestine National Council had given the green signal to Palestinian participation in the West Asia peace conference? Specially when this meant that all the participants - Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon - have now agreed to attend the conference which is expected to be convened under the two Super Powers' auspices later this month? It is because he knows what difficulties still remain despite the seven exhaustive "shuttles" he has undertaken in the region on this mission after the end of the Gulf war. An indication is the Israeli reaction to the PNC decision. The PNC, the Palestinian Parliament-in-exile, which met in Algiers has shown pragmatism in agreeing to Palestinians attending the peace meet even though it has been specifically debarred from participation. It has the confidence that it represents the Palestinians and so whoever the Palestinian representatives might be they will follow its line. This is what upset Israel and led to its reaction. The PNC has, moreover, while not making them preconditions for participation, restated its "aims". The main demand is that a solution to the Palestine problem must be based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 which envisaged a territories for peace deal. Another "aim" is that Jerusalem must be seen as an occupied territory. The eventual "aim" is, of course, formation of a Palestinian State.

The agreement to jointly convene a West Asia peace conference in October 1991 was taken at the recent Super Power Summit in Moscow. The Soviet Union has, however, largely been a silent partner because of the

upheavals in the country. But President Bush has made it a priority issue. Recently, he even took on the powerful, pro-Israeli lobby at home when he called for Congress to postpone giving a \$ 10 billion housing loan guarantee to Israel to "give peace a chance". It is probably the first time since President Eisenhower's action on Suez that an American President has stood up to Israel. With his prestige on the line, it is hoped that his Secretary of State will be able to get the parties to further compromise.

Having endorsed the American - led peace process in West Asia, Jordan appears to have taken two fundamental decisions: It will attend the proposed Arab-Israeli peace conference under US - Soviet co-sponsorship if other key Arab countries attend, even if the Palestinians do not, and, no matter what happens, the kingdom will not speak for the Palestinian people.

The core of the argument tabled by the Jordanian leadership is clear and simple: What is the logic of Jordan staying back for the sake of the Palestinians if other Arab states directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict - mainly Syria and Lebanon, and, to a limited extent, Egypt - attend the proposed peace parelys particularly when the kingdom has a host of issues, including water resources as well as border and security arrangements to discuss and negotiate with Israel?

However, Jordanian officials are at pains to reaffirm that such Jordanian participation and discussions will not imply that the kingdom is willing to sacrifice the Palestinian cause by entering separate agreement with Israel without ensuring that the Palestinians also reach accord with the Jews.

"If we do not find a solution to the Palestinian problem then there is no solution to any problem," said Prime Minister Taher Masri, who is of Palestinian origin, in a television interview this week.

The main element in the Jordanian approach to the peace process is a guarantee it has secured from Washington that the American interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution No. 242 is close to that of Arab side.

Resolution No. 242 calls for Israeli withdrawal from territories the Jewish state occupied in the 1967 West Asia war, but interpretations are many, including the Israeli contention that it had fulfilled the withdrawal call by returning Egyptian territory under the 1979 separate treaty it entered with Egypt.

All parties involved in the peace process, including US Secretary James Baker, who secured Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian and Gulf Arab support as well as Israeli endorsement of the forthcoming conference proposal, meanwhile confront a major problem.



Israel has said that it would not hold any peace talks with Palestinian negotiators if they were members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or from Arab east Jerusalem. The PLO and most of its constituency, the almost two million Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and another three million in Diaspora, reject the Israeli conditions.

Such an influx to Jordan, which already has a majority Palestinian population, could undermine the delicate demographic structure of the kingdom and threaten its security and stability. It is against this backdrop that the Jordanian stand during the Gulf crisis should be seen. Jordan was very worried over the status quo in the peace process while huge numbers of Soviet Jews emigrated to Israel and while Israel continued to build settlements in occupied territories. Jordan saw the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as having shook the status quo although the kingdom did not endorse Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, since such endorsement would have questioned Amman's call for an end to Israel's occupation of Arab territories.

The Palestinian tragedy lies in the fact that although it is widely recognized that the Palestinian question is the pivot of any settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute and the emergence of a Palestinian State is the key to peace in West Asia, an effective consensus on the crucial issue remains elusive as ever. Meanwhile, as the author of the book cheated by the World aptly argues, the hapless Palestinians, the most talented and educated among the Arabs, continue to be wronged and betrayed not only by their enemies but also their (Arab) friends who have been "reluctant to risk their respective interests for the sake of Palestinian freedom." Hindsight now suggests that the Arabs should have accepted the U.N. - truncated Palestine for a State instead of going to war against Israel and losing entire Palestine in the process. As U.S. - backed Israel keeps flouting the Security Council resolutions on withdrawal from occupied West Bank and Gaza, "through the years the U.N. learnt to assume that there was nothing more to be done about Palestine except to reiterate ritualistically and ineffectively every year the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or receive compensation." The title of the book, *Cheated. By the World*, thus suitably sums up the Palestinian destiny and Punyapriya Dasgupta develops his thesis with a mass of supporting details. The fraud began with the Balfour Declaration recommending a Jewish immigration into Palestine since the end of World War I. "Nobody can give what he does not possess", says Dasgupta. The Jewish population of Palestine which initially did not number more than one-tenth swelled by leaps and bounds thanks to relentless immigration, thus preparing the ground for a Jewish State.<sup>9</sup>

Dasgupta points out that after the creation of Israel in May, 1948, the U.K.'s role was taken over by the USA which granted the new State instant recognition. The American stakes in the viability of Israel have been enormous. Washington sees Israel as an invaluable strategic asset in an oil-rich region vital to Western security. Dasgupta refers to the strategic cooperation agreement signed on November 11, 1981 by which the USA accepted Israel as one of the outposts in West Asia.

In fact, so formidable is the Jewish lobby or the Zionist pressure group in the USA at various levels that no American President can antagonize the Israeli Government and risk a serious breach with it. To quote Dasgupta, fabulous sums are regularly paid by American Jewish organizations to American politicians to ensure support to Israel. America's failure to use its leverage on Israel has again been demonstrated by its inaction towards Jewish settlements in West Bank and Gaza - a unique form of "settler-colonialism". In fact, Israel's policy on occupied Arab territories runs counter to the aims and principles of the U.N. Charter and the norms of international law. Besides the vicious crackdown on Intifada is still fresh in public memory. Dasgupta does not spare the Arab States either. Not all Arab States can be absolved from the charge of politicking with the fate of the Palestinians. King Hussein's crackdown on the PLO in 1970, President Sadat's lukewarm attitude towards the Palestinian cause and President Assad's betrayal of the PLO by virtually siding with the Lebanese Christians during the 1982 war are glaring instances of the lack of Arab solidarity. Both the Arabs and Jews are Semitic people with ancient roots in the Holy Land. But Israel's determination to retain control over the West Bank and Gaza strip springs from a fundamentalist belief that these territories constitute a part of what was Biblically described as Eretz Israel or the land of Israel, gifted to the Jews by Jehovah. Dasgupta, however, puts forward the widespread Arab view that the Biblical promise of territory was for all descendants of Abraham - the Arabs through Ishmael and the Jews through Isaac. Besides "even according to the Zionist interpretation of Old Testament logic, Palestine cannot belong to all Jews and to Jews alone because, first, many non-Jews are descendants of Abraham and, further, a very large number of Jews are not descendants of Abraham." Of course, Palestinians also must learn to live with the fact of Israel. In fact, the PLO implicitly recognized Israel's right to exist when Arafat who leads the moderates declared in May, 1989 that the PLO Charter calling for the destruction of Israel was now obsolete. Arafat was even ready to open direct talks with Israel. But all these overtures drew no favourable response from the intransigent Shamir who would under no circumstances recognize PLO as the representative of the Palestinians and continues to reject any dealings with the PLO. When this writer met Farouq Kaddoumi, the head of

PLO's political Department and Arafat's close associate, at Beirut in July, 1974, the latter made it clear that the PLO was ready to set up a national authority on any part of Palestine liberated from Israel or vacated by it. Now, 17 years later, even such a modest goal appears to be a distant dream.<sup>10</sup>

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) has said the Soviet Union should continue to play its role in the Middle East peace process and in serving the causes of peace and justice world-wide and in the region in accordance with the international legality.

In his message to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on August 26, 1991 the PLO chairman Yasser Arafat wished the Soviet Union progress, prosperity and the return of political stability and democracy.

In India we will have to be prepared for some psychological and attitudinal adjustments following the likely West Asian peace accord. We had invested heavily in terms of emotion on the Palestinians. History is cruel and pursuit of national interests has to be unsentimental.<sup>11</sup>

About the assassination of the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi the PLO Leader Yasser Arafat has said that, "I had received direct information one month before his assassination about an international conspiracy" and he had communicated this through his ambassador in New Delhi to Rajiv Gandhi who also had information about this. He said that it was not a simple murder but an international conspiracy as Rajiv Gandhi had assumed international personality. Arafat said that, "Now we are realising how important he was for all of us and the NAM."

But my sympathy (for the Jews) does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for the national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood? Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on the Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct." (Mahatma Gandhi in *Harijan*, November 26, 1938.).

On the situation in West Asia Prime Minister P. V. Narashimha Rao said in New Delhi. On September 18, 1991 India would welcome convening of an international peace conference to settle the Palestinian issue.<sup>12</sup>

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## ARABS AND SEARCH FOR PEACE

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The US, cannot afford to ignore the Palestinian issue even at this hour of its triumph. Beyond ceasefire and the task of reconstruction, West Asia requires a healing touch. Herein lies the real challenge to President George Bush's post-triumph diplomacy in the Gulf.

The one issue that Saddam Hussein has exploited with dramatic effect throughout the Arab world has been the plight of the Palestinian Arabs in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. During the war, Bush could keep the lid on with his "no linkage" policy. But he is now under increasing pressure to do something about UN resolution 242 of 1967, which calls for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Government would obviously prefer to keep the Palestinian issue on the back burner while making a separate peace with Syria as was done with Egypt. With the newly established authority of his recent victory, only Bush is in a position to determine that the Palestinian issue should be moved to the top of the Middle East agenda. Many Arab diplomats and officials hope that such American involvement might persuade Israel to take a new look at the feasibility of Palestinian autonomy and eventual independence. Bush's political advisers might counsel against it, in view of the 1992 elections. But now is the time to settle the Palestinian issue which otherwise will continue to remain the cause of recurrent war.

The US secretary of state, James Baker, has completed his tour of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Israel and Syria and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Israel and Syria and is now in Moscow consulting the governments of these countries in a bid to resolve the "mother of all West Asian problems" - the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories on West Bank and Gaza Strip.

\*M.C. Menon. A time for Peace. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1991.

Simultaneously President Bush conferred with French President Mitterand on this issue in the island of Martinique and this is to be followed by his meeting with the British Prime Minister John Major in Bermuda. For the first time in recent years a US secretary of state discussed the Palestinian issue substantively with the Syrian leadership and listened to a Palestinian delegation in Jerusalem, associated with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) though not representing it.

James Baker exudes optimism and talks of a window of opportunity, mentioning flexibility in thinking in the Arab countries. He asserts there can be no double standards in the application of UN resolutions on the Palestinian issue, especially resolution 242 which asks Israel to vacate all land occupied during 1967 war. However, the Arab leaderships and even sources, close to PLO have spoken positively of Baker's consultations. However, the sad part of all these consultations is the exclusion of the PLO leadership itself. The PLO leader Yasser Arafat, because of his unwise and imprudent identification with Mr. Saddam Hussein has, not only alienated the United States but also the Arab leaderships of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf States. The Arab leaders themselves still stress that PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of Palestinians but are looking for an alternative leader to replace Arafat.

The Palestinian issue has moved to the central stage and it looks as though the US is interested to keep the war time alliance of Arab states as a cohesive structure favourably inclined towards itself. A security structure for this volatile area has to address itself to the Palestinian issue since the Palestinian diaspora in this region has a bearing not only on the issue of Homeland for these unfortunate people but also political stability of the Gulf states where that population has been dispersed. However, as of now there is absolutely no sign of any change in the obduracy of the Israeli leadership. Presumably the Israelis are hoping to exploit the alienation of Arab leaders from Yassar Arafat on the one hand the vulnerability of king Hussein of Jordan on the other Israel has again reiterated the Shamir Plan of 1989 which does not permit an independent Palestine but an intermediate stage of elections in West Bank and Gaza and subsequent confederation of the territory with the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. Meanwhile the Israelis insist that the peace process should be carried through with the recognition of Israel by its Arab neighbours and their bilateral negotiations. One of Mr. Saddam Hussein's contributions to future international relations could be the creation of a climate in which the Arab nations may be contemplating a move towards taking this step. The king of Jordan may find that he had to pay that price to keep his kingdom.

Already there are suggestions in the US that the Emir of Kuwait should be pressurised to set the ball rolling with recognition of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

There are other suggestions that the king of Saudi Arabia should make up with Israel. The Arab nations are not likely to have the clout they had in the seventies and early eighties, if as is expected widely the oil price, stays at relatively moderate price levels and many of them have to pay for repairing ecological damage and reconstruction. As there is an increasing demand for liberalisation and pluralism in their countries, they may have to spend more on education, public services and even on internal security. In these circumstances India will have to re-evaluate its policy of the basic commitment to get the justice done to the Palestinians but the modalities for our objective and our general strategy. Already two Muslim countries, Turkey and Egypt have ambassadorial relations with Israel. India has always recognised Israel since its creation by the UN and came very near to raising the level of relations to ambassadorial level on more than one occasion. The Soviet Union which had broken relations with Israel in 1967 are restoring them. Surely it will not be in our interest if we are to send an ambassador to Israel after Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia do so. Secondly at this stage when developments are unfolding fast in West Asia India must have its direct communication capability with various parties if this country has to have any influence at all on the events.<sup>2</sup>

Dozens of Palestinians gathered on March 5, 1991 outside the Kuwaiti Embassy in Jordan waiting to sign a "book of congratulations" in the hope that this small gesture would earn them the right to return to the liberated emirate. All morning they queued in the bright sunshine - a line of anxious, hopeful men surrounded by big bouquets of flowers which, for all Saddam Hussein's widespread popularity in Jordan, started arriving at the mebbassy as soon as the Iraqis were routed.

Most of the Palestinians had fled to Jordan several months ago. The knowledge that some of their countrymen who stayed behind were being attacked by Kuwaitis for being pro-Iraqi did not appear to worry them. Their overriding concern was simply to get back their jobs and their homes. By noon, more than 300 of the Palestinians had signed the book. It was a sad spectacle. The Palestinians looked nervous and distrustful. Theirs was a genuine, powerful fear - that, once again in the history of the Palestinian diaspora, they would be forced to abandon everything, and move on.

Some had lived in Kuwait all their lives. Others had set up home there, after fleeing the West Bank when the Israelis occupied it in 1967. There was a Palestinian post office official who had worked in Kuwait for 26

years, a Pizza Hut manager who was born there, a lorry driver who had been there for 33 years. A technician aged 30 described how he left Kuwait hoping to stay with his elderly parents on the West bank until after the war. He said the Israelis refused him entry: he did not qualify as he was under 15 when he moved to the emirate. So he was stranded in Jordan, jobless and penniless.

At least one of the Palestinians, Abdel Hadis Rammaha, faced being uprooted for a third time in his life. He left Jaffa, during the 1948 Arab - Israeli war, and fled the West Bank 11 years later. "I have spent 32 years in Kuwait," said Rammaha, 59, a former fire brigade mechanic. "I just want to go back. I am not happy in Jordan. There is no work here."<sup>3</sup>

Abdulla Latif, 38, a Kuwait Oil Company clerk, escaped to Jordan with his wife and three small children two months ago. Like most of the Gulf Palestinians, they are lodging with relatives. His efforts to find a new job have so far been in vain. Before the crisis, unemployment in Jordan was around 20 per cent; the influx of more than 200,000 Palestinians has caused it to soar to more than 30 per cent.

"I apply to people for jobs, but they don't answer," he said, "They don't seem to like us here." Like Lime Many in the queue, he was dismissive of the threat of Kuwaiti reprisals. "The Kuwaitis understand that not all the Palestinians were trouble-makers. I am not too worried about that. I just want to go home."

Kuwaiti soldiers and resistance fighters have detained 6,000 Palestinians in the liberated emirate.

Kuwaiti officials said on March 7, 1991 resistance forces, turning to vengeance, beat up scores of Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Iraqis. Reports say Palestinians were burnt with cigarette butts and their nails pulled out.

The U.S. President George Bush, rebuffed the French President, Francis Mitterand, in their talks at Port-de-France (Martinique) on March 16, 1991 on the issue of talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

While Mitterand strongly urged a role for the PLO in West Asia talks, George Bush said no. President Bush was prepared for talks with Palestinians but not with the PLO.

Bush also rebuffed Mitterand on his proposal for a summit meeting of the members of the Security Council to frame the new world order instead of the U.S. - led coalition trying to evolve one. George Bush said: "There was no request on his part, nor did I state on our part when such a meeting might be timely."

U.S. media reports said George Bush rejected long arguments by Mitterand on the PLO's role. "We don't have any intention of resuming our dialogue," with the PLO, said Bush when asked if his repeated criticism of the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, was an indication of his stand.

George Bush endorsed the U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker's meeting on March 12, 1991 with ten independent Palestinians in Jerusalem. Although some in that meeting were PLO members and the meeting had the PLO's approval, technically the Palestinians came as individuals.

On the PLO issue and Yasser Arafat's leadership, Mitterand said firmly: "That's for the Palestinians to answer that. Arafat remains, to my knowledge, the leader of the PLO, and to my knowledge the PLO still appears as the representative organisation of the Palestinians."

Israel on March 17, 1991 authorised Palestinian workers from occupied territories to return to several important towns, exactly two months after the beginning of the Gulf war.

Palestinian workers had been banned by the army from going to Tel Aviv and Haifa, the main targets of the Iraqi missiles during the war.

The 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip occupied by Israel had been banned from the territory occupied by Israel before 1967 since the beginning of the Gulf war on January 17, 1991 to prevent pro-Iraqi demonstrations.

In the inter-Arab manoeuvring that will inevitably follow the war, the one thing they will agree on is the need to address the Palestinian question. No doubt there will be new moves in the Security Council to this end, in the hope that the west will turn the pressure on Israel. President Bush will do his best to persuade the Israelis to improve the regional atmosphere by making at least a show of flexibility reminding them, perhaps, that the greatest military danger Israel faced has been destroyed by allied arms. It is easy to predict the initial Israeli response; that the war had nothing to do with them; that the PLO, with which they are enjoined to negotiate, took the side of Saddam; and that the roots of the problem in the Gulf lie not in the Arab-Israel dispute but in the inherent instability of regimes that, for an inextricable mixture of historical, religious and economic reasons remain stubbornly impervious to democracy. In all this, the Israelis would be right. However, if Israel wishes to live in peace with its neighbours, it will have to come to terms with them.<sup>4</sup>

Undaunted by the prospect of Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman, Yasser Arafat, has said that

the uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories would go on stronger than ever, Arafat, whose organisation sided with Iraq throughout the Gulf conflict, said its outcome would not quell the three-year-old "intifada" or uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which Israel seized in 1967. Speaking on Algerian television, on February 28, 1991 Arafat said that one result of the war would be a toughening of the stance of Israeli hardliners "who want to see greater Israel stretching from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates." He accused the U.S. of seeking to impose a post-war settlement on West Asia similar to the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty that divided up the Arab lands under the tottering Ottoman empire into European protectorates and zones of influence.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation will accept direct talks with the Israeli government as long as they are held under the auspices of the United Nations, PLO leader Yasser Arafat told the French daily *Le Figaro* - on March 18, 1991.

"I do not ask that the Israelis accept the idea of a (Palestinian) state to start talks with them," he said.

But he added, "I do ask that the discussions be based on the UN resolutions", referring to UN calls for Israel to give up Arab territories it seized during the 1967 six-day war.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is vehemently opposed to any talks on the occupied territories involving the PLO.

But Arafat told *Le Figaro*, "we have the right to go to the negotiating table with our own ideas, our own claims, however divergent. They may be, and talk. The (UN) Security Council will be the arbiter."

He said he saw "positive elements" in US President George Bush's speech to Congress recently.

United Nations Security Council members on March 28, 1991 "deplored" Israel's move to expel four Palestinians from their homeland, which has been under its occupation for 24 years, and asked it to "desist" from such a move.

By a presidential statement, the 15-nation Council voiced "grave concern" over the worsening situation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, including Jerusalem, "and specially the current serious situation resulting from the imposition of curfew by Israel."

The statement, read out by Austrian envoy Peter Hohenfellner, currently presiding over the Council, said, "the members deplore the decision of March 24, 1991 by the Government of Israel to expel four Palestinian civilians in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention."

The Geneva Convention deals for protection of civilians in times of war.

The members, which include India, also held the Israeli move to be "in contravention of relevant resolutions of the Security Council."

The members also called on Israel to desist from deporting Palestinians and to ensure the safe return of those deported.

The Council is the UN organ for maintenance of international peace and security, which recently authorised the Gulf war to eject Iraq out of Kuwait.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat has warned US Secretary of State James Baker, that it is bye-bye for peace if the PLO is forced to remain on the sidelines in any regional peace efforts.

In an interview to "The USA Today" he said "if Arafat is not beautiful enough to deal with for the PLO, there will be no peace.

"What peace is he going to make and with whom..," Yasser Arafat asked.

He said "this is like treating cancer by using aspirin, this means bye-bye for peace."

Arafat admitted that the PLO had lost hundreds of millions of dollars by supporting Iraq and Saddam Hussein in the Gulf war.

"We lost as an Arab nation our military power and our money", he added.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were among the financial backers of the PLO.

Palestinian leaders have urged Washington to resume its severed contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation as part of its drive to promote Middle East Peace.

The request was made during virtually unprecedented talks on March 14, 1991 between James Baker, secretary of state, and 10 Palestinian leaders. Many members of the Palestinian delegation from the occupied territories are affiliated to the PLO. The talks, during Baker's three-day visit to Israel, took place in the American Consulate in Jerusalem despite Washington's decision to break off an 18-month dialogue with the PLO in June 1990 in protest at the organisation's failure fully to condemn an attempted terrorist raid on Israeli beaches. Baker is visiting the region to seize what he describes as "an historic opportunity" to achieve Middle East peace following the upheaval of the Gulf war. He is calling on Israel to respond favourably to signs of "new thinking" among Arab countries, but he did not give details of what concessions Arab leaders may be willing to make. Israel insists the PLO must be ostracised after offering its open

support to Iraq during the Gulf war. Baker is said to have asked Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories whether they would be prepared to take political steps without the PLO's approval. But the delegation from the occupied territories was adamant that the Tunis-based organisation was the Palestinians sole representative.

"We insisted that the PLO must be at the negotiating table," said Faisal Husseini, the leading Palestinian figure in east Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

"If the Middle East is going to come out of the circle of violence, the only way out is for the Americans to re-start the dialogue with the PLO," said resumption.

Saddam Hussein spoke with composure above the din of Rightwing Israeli demonstrators shouting: "Faisal Husseini go home, you murderer. This is our land." The extremists' anger will have been stoked further by the sight of Hussein being led away under the protection of Israeli police officers.<sup>6</sup>

Israeli officials sought to play down the importance of the meeting, saying Baker was free to speak to whomever he chose. But they will be intrigued by the Palestinians' apparent willingness to drop their insistence on calling an international peace conference on the Middle East, which is resolutely opposed by Israel.

"An international conference is a means, not the end," said Professor Hanan Ashrawi, a lecturer at Bir Zeit university in the West Bank, who said the talks with Baker were "very, very frank and sincere."

In Egypt, President Mubarak said the time was not ripe for an international conference.

He suggested confidence building measures between Israel and Arab countries should be implemented first. A further sign of goodwill emerged when two Israeli cabinet ministers appeared on American television for a rare debate on the peace process with two leading Palestinian intellectuals. Baker on March 15, 1991 met Yitzhak Shamir, the prime minister, for more than 80 minutes of talks and the two men were due to meet later for a private dinner. Baker also met Moshe Arenas, defence minister.

Army radio said Baker had protested about reports that Israel was stepping up construction in the occupied West Bank and settling thousands of Soviet Jews there. Avi Pazner, Shamir's spokesman, described the talks the two sides had agreed on a parallel approach to the peace process; making simultaneous efforts to resolve disputes between Israel and Arab states, and between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel is putting forward its

failed 1989 election and autonomy plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip as its opening gambit in the peace process.

After openly displaying his frustration at Jerusalem's refusal to take part in United States-sponsored talks with Palestinians to discuss the proposal last year, Baker is now cautiously optimistic about the future prospects for peace.

During a visit to Carmiel, Baker said: "The storm is over.....The nations of the Middle East are, I think, very anxious to close the book of war and open the book of peace."<sup>7</sup>

Baker was later taken to view Israel's pre-1967 borders by helicopter. The flight included a quick dash across the 10-mile "narrow waist-line" between the sea and the edge of the occupied West Bank to illustrate Jerusalem's security worries in giving up land.

President Bush last week called for Israel to give up land captured during the 1967 six Day War in return for peace, but Israeli ministers publicly reject this.

Israeli officials are expressing interest in confidence- building measures, raising in particular the question of the Arab economic boycott of Israel and hostile moves in the United Nations. The agenda of the United Nations General Assembly, for example, includes a motion every year calling on Israel to pay reparations to Iraq for bombing the Osiraw nuclear reactor in 1981.

There have also been several hints that Israel would agree to take part in some form of regional conference on peace, or on specific topics such as weapons control, which would include separate negotiations with Arab states.

The Palestinian problems is, of course, the crux of the matter and there is no reason to believe that the United States will be in a position to solve the problem. It is true that Yasser Arafat is one of the losers of the war, but it will be a mistake to write him off; he has survived many flascos and can be expected to be a force as long as he retains the support of the Palestinian people. The Palestine Liberation Organisation, too is a loser and Israel is bound to exploit the situation to its advantage. The Yitzhak Shamir government has already earned the gratitude of the United States by its restraint in the face of Iraqi missile attacks and it is bound to cash its cheque. Israel has made it clear that it is willing to negotiate with the Arabs but on its own terms; it is not willing to accept either Arafat or the PLO as inter-locutors, but will negotiate with the representations of the people living in the occupied territories. It is determined to ensure the settlement of Jews



emigrating from Soviet Union in the West Bank and equally determined to safeguard its security interests. All that Shamir is willing to grant the Palestinians is a certain local autonomy. And if Henry Kissinger has as much influence with the Bush administration as is claimed, then his plan, which excludes the Soviet Union from the peace making process and includes only those Arab States which are the allies of America, is a sure recipe for disaster. It is not Saudi Arabia or Kuwait or, for that matter, even Egypt which can negotiate a Palestinian settlement with Israel. Any attempt to do so will brand the leaders of these states as traitors to the Arab cause. What has to be kept in mind is that the gap between the rulers and the ruled in the Arab world is enormous. Even those who are opposed to Saddam realise that his defiance of the West has made him extremely popular in the Arab world. There have been demonstrations in his favour even in those countries which are members of the American-led coalition. The defeat and humiliation of Iraq will be seen as another Arab defeat to be avenged and the masses might react by turning against the leaders whose policies led to the humiliation of an Arab people.

Even if Saddam Hussein is removed from power, his legacy will remain and there will be others who will claim his mantle. Anti-Western sentiment and anti-American feeling will dominate West Asian policies for sometime and the frustration with politics will lead to terrorism and sporadic violence. Islamic fundamentalism will be the main beneficiary; a religious zealot can exploit the frustrations and humiliations of the Arab people to suit his own political objectives.<sup>8</sup>

Now that the debilitating war in West Asia is over and the first of the allied forces are headed home, it is high time that international focus shifts to the Palestinian problem - an issue that has hardly been dealt with in a forthright fashion all these years. Unfortunately even now there seems to be reluctance in some-quarters to come to grips with the problem which can be explained in part by the manner in which the war ended and in the "declining" fortunes of the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Yasser Arafat. Although several times in his long career the PLO chief found himself in a corner, the Kuwaiti crisis has dealt him a severe blow, economically and politically. Having been perceived as pro-Saddam Hussein, most of the Gulf states cut him off, in the process crippling the financial machine of that organisation. Apart from suspending direct contributions, the deportation of several thousand Palestinians has taken its toll on the remittances. In human terms, Palestinians in Kuwait are reportedly targets of attack for their role during the seven-month occupation by Saddam Hussein's soldiers. The PLO leader has openly voiced concern for

his people living in Kuwait and it is the hope that authorities there do not embark on any mass victimisation programme that would not only delay the reconstruction process but also set off fresh problems in the region. Ironically, in the last few months no one seemed to pay any attention to the plight of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza - they were forced to pay a heavy price for their vocal support of Mr. Hussein. A United Nations report has it that since December 1987 nearly 75,000 Palestinians have stood trial before military courts with most of them not having been informed of why they were arrested or having any chance to appeal. Aside from the fact that the Israeli authorities resort to mass arrests, several hundreds of the detainees were minors, with ill-treatment during detention being a customary practice. The right wing regime in Israel can be expected to fight tooth and nail any lasting solution to the Palestinian problem. The "land for peace" formula has never been a part of the political vocabulary of the hawks in the Shamir regime or that of most of its predecessors. With the bloody conflict in the Gulf out of the way, European and Arab partners in the U.S. - led coalition are waiting to see if the Bush administration would go along with the idea of convening an international conference.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that George Bush, in his address to Congress, has said that "the time has come to put an end to the Arab- Israeli conflict" is positive indeed. Central to any lasting peace and stability in E West Asia is the acknowledgement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. And there can be no two ways of looking at that much of Washington's credibility in West Asia is linked to its ability to deliver the goods - that is in forcing the Shamir regime to come to terms with regional and international realities. What is encouraging is that the leader of Israel's Labour Party, Shimon Peres, has argued that if the United States fails to convince the Shamir regime to engage in serious talks with a view to solving the problem, the international community could take Israel before the United Nations Security Council. Sober minded politicians within Israel are convinced that negotiations are the only way to go about on the Palestinian issue. In the immediate context, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker's visit to Israel and parts of West Asia would provide more light on the current thinking in those capitals. At this point of time, it would be a miscalculation on the part of Arab states to try and settle scores with Mr. Arafat or work towards weakening his position within the PLO as that would only be strengthening the hands of Israel.

Anger has led Palestinians to believe that in terrorism lies their salvation: Washington and its allies cannot dismiss the fear that more Arabs will

be consumed by the culture of the gun after Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Is the West equipped to win the trust of those who till yesterday were shouting pro-Saddam slogans in the streets of Islamabad, Amman, Cairo and Rabat? Also, the US Administration would miss an important historical opportunity if it delays the settlement of the Palestinian question which is the source of many tensions in West Asia. Israeli persuasion, and even pressure, can always be effective in Washington but the war in the Persian Gulf has made the settlement of the Palestinian question more urgent than before. Israeli euphoria and demoralised Palestinian psyche are going to be hurdles, but these will have to be crossed.<sup>10</sup>

Fresh Israeli excesses will provoke excessive retaliation by Arabs and Palestinians staying not only in Arab lands, but all over the world. There is a large population of Palestinians in Arab land especially in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who play a vital role in these countries' economic activities. Palestinians are anti-Israeli and anti-United States and necessarily anti-war against Iraq.

The Palestinians and other Arabs stay not only in Arab lands but also in several countries of Europe and America. They will naturally be provoked to step up anti-US activities in all these countries. The response to Saddam's call for Jihad will move Muslims all over the world and will convert America's anti-Iraq war into Islam's anti-American war.<sup>11</sup>

Because of its strategic position and rich natural resources, the Middle East is a region coveted by many powers, leading to numerous crises. The question of longest standing and one greatly influencing world peace is the Arab-Israeli conflict. In November 1947, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution for the partition of Palestine into two states: one Jewish and one Arab. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was established. The next day, the first Middle East war broke out between Arab countries and Israel, and thus began a long succession of Arab-Israeli conflicts. Again in 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars erupted. In the four Middle East wars, Israel occupied a large stretch of Arab land, involving Palestinian territories. Millions of Palestinians became refugees. The current thrust of Middle East and Palestinian questions came into being then. Many proposals towards a resolution have been advanced by the international community and other concerned parties. The United Nations also adopted a series of related resolutions. All these efforts have gradually promoted the Arab-Israeli conflicts to develop towards political settlement but not military confrontation. In 1988 and 1989 the Middle East issue saw a prospect for a peaceful settlement. However, since the beginning of the 1990s, the Middle East region has been greatly influenced by changes in the international structure and the situation has again become tense. A large number of Jews im-

migrated to Israel, the United States stopped talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli government hardened its attitude towards the Palestinian question. Efforts of the PLO and Arab nations to seek a political settlement were threatened. The outbreak of the Gulf crisis negatively influenced the Middle East peace process, throwing Arab-Israeli conflicts out of the focus. But with the end of the Gulf war, world attention was again focused on the Middle East and Palestinian questions.<sup>12</sup>

Since the Palestine problem stands unresolved, what steps the U.S. would take to resolve the crisis is to be seen. The solution now to a large extent, lies with Israel also, because of if Israel decides to return all the occupied territories, it runs the risk of winding up like Lebanon, if it insists on holding every inch of occupied areas, it could suffer the fate of South Africa and find itself isolated and could even face sanctions imposed by the U.N. for its own sake. Israel must find a middle way to resolve the crisis. These questions will certainly decide the future of the Middle East, but how America would try to shape the future world order is also important? As Henry Kissinger has indicated that in the long run America would not be able to police the international events, due to its economic weakness. Economic power used to be the strengths of the U.S., but it is not the strong card, other countries like Germany and Japan have fared well in this field. He believes that America therefore, would have to follow the path of balance of power system to maintain the status quo and America would have to associate with other influential powers. If the outcome of the war presently is, the American superiority, in future other powers may also emerge in the world arena and replace the American monopoly of power. But till then other countries acquire such power level in world politics, they would have to remain in American tutelage and therefore, America would try to rely less on the economic power and would continue to use force to fulfil its international designs. Thus it may be concluded that there is nothing new in this world order but simply the American monopoly of power.<sup>13</sup>

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## KASHMIR - AN ISLAMIC PROBLEM?

India has expressed its concern over the "ethnic cleansing" going on in Bosnia. In doing so, our delegation at Jakarta must have been influenced by the Organisation of Islamic Countries, which had also pitched its tent in the Spice islands. But then, how many of our public figures have felt the urgent necessity of stopping "ethnic cleansing" in our own Kashmir. With such track record, full of duplicity and vote-catching tactics, no one is going to take us seriously. Similarly, Iranian President Rafsanjani's reference to Kashmir "as an Islamic problem" and "complaint" against the UNO in his speech to the Pakistan National Assembly may be ascribed to our turning a blind eye when Iran sought to meddle in the Ayodhya developments earlier. We also kept quiet when the Afghan President Mojaddidi said that India's treatment of its Muslim minority will be an important factor in determining future Indo-Afghan ties and demanded "Muslims in India must be given their rights". Our sub-servience to Pan-Islamism must end.<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan's India-baiting - both on the military and political fronts - continues unabated. The proof lies in the activities of its leadership at the Jakarta summit of Non-Aligned as well as in the provocative statements of political leaders in Pak-occupied Kashmir. According to an announcement made by several political parties a mass crossing of the border to India is slated for October 24, 1992 to protest against 'Indian atrocities on Kashmiris'. The crossing by at least for Pak-occupied Kashmir-based groups will be attempted at more than 40 border points on October 24, president of the Kashmir wing of Pakistan Muslim League, Mohammad Hayat Khan, announced at a press conference in Islamabad. By now, the international community, particularly United States and the United

Kingdom, are convinced that Pakistan has been aiding and abetting terrorism in the Kashmir Valley. Both the US and the UK have been urging Pakistan - though not with significant results - to desist from interfering in the internal affairs of India. According to intelligence reports from across the border, Pakistan has been making frantic and consistent efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue and has earlier too raised the issue in for a like UN, NAM and OIC and has been told to settle the issue bilaterally with India under the Simla Agreement provisions. India's consistent stand has been that Jammu and Kashmir are an integral part of India and national sovereignty is not negotiable. Notwithstanding this, Pakistan has often enough raised the bogey of jihad and has gone all out to stir Islamic fundamentalist and communal passions in the Kashmir Valley. It has led to much flow of innocent blood and untold misery of the common people; on the other hand, it has satisfied the sinister designs of Pakistan. A number of jihad conferences, rallies and demonstrations have been held in Pakistan and POK to express solidarity with the Kashmir terrorists who have been praised as 'shahids', 'mujahideen's and 'hurriyat pasands'.<sup>2</sup>

Pakistan has set up about 105 training camps - 48 in Pakistan, 49 in POK and eight on the Pak-Afghan border to train militants in the art of subversion as also to indoctrinate them. The training is in guerilla warfare, laying of mines, control of remote control devices, and wireless communication. Selected trainees are put through advanced courses to enable them to use SVD Dragunov Sniper rifles and anti-aircraft weapons. Some militant trainees were sent to the Afghan border in the Khost area to fight along with the Afghan Mujahideens. All finances for the training and upkeep of the militant trainees are provided by Pakistan. Office and telephone facilities, free of cost, are also provided by Pakistan. Pakistan has been running more than 50 transit camps in either Pakistan itself or in POK for coordinating with and obtaining instructions from the Pakistani authorities. One such training centre at Muzaffarabad in POK was filmed and telecast by BBC. To keep a watch on the militants and provide constant guidance to them the pro-Pakistani militant Tanzeems have their representatives based in Pakistan or POK for coordinating with and obtaining instructions from the state authorities. An effort is made by the militant groups to keep in constant touch with Pakistan to implement the schemes prepared and directed by their Pakistani mentors. Apart from financial aid, training and refuge granted to militants, Pakistan has been supplying all manner of lethal and sophisticated arms to the militant groups operating in the Kashmir Valley, AK rifles, machine-guns, anti-tank and anti-personnel

mines, rocket launchers, grenades and explosives of all kinds, pistols and the most sophisticated 10 SVD Dragunov telescopic sniper rifles with large amounts of ammunition and explosives have been given to the militant groups. Pakistan's support to Kashmiri terrorists has been convincingly established by well documented evidence collected by India. This has been confirmed and cross-checked with various militants who have been apprehended by Indian security forces. It has offered open sanctuaries to Kashmiri terrorists. It has now become public that the Kashmir Freedom Front (Rawalpindi) has opened an account (Account No. 14241) with the Habib Bank, Rawalpindi, to provide financial support to terrorists operating in the Kashmir Valley.<sup>3</sup>

Serious and honest introspection is needed on two vital matters - Indo-Pak relations and Hindu-Muslim problem in India. True patriotism lies in striving to promote the national interests of India, in promoting social harmony and ensuring peace and prosperity to all Indians. Chauvinism and Jingoism are not patriotism. To understand problems in their entirety and find lasting and desirable solutions, it is imperative that we should investigate them from all angles with an open mind. We should understand the opponent's point of view to arrive at mutually beneficial compromise solutions which alone guarantee their implementation. It has become an obsession with Hindu elite that the cause for the vivisection of India was the strange intransigence of Muslim leaders in pro-independence India that Pakistan is an implaceable enemy of India. Subtle Western propaganda has vastly contributed to distrust between Hindus and Muslims and continued hostility between India and Pakistan in the West's designs for neo-colonialism over India and Pakistan and the Third World. Jinnah and the Ali brothers were staunch nationalists and ardent Congressmen at first. In their later life, they became disillusioned with Hindu ruling classes on account of the latter's actions and activities. At the time of partition, the Muslim elite opted for Pakistan where Muslims could live in peace and harmony. So, the unholy lobby is the basic underlying cause for vivisection of India. If we ignore this fact, we cannot fully understand the Indo-Pak problem and hence cannot contribute to its solution. Having chosen to get away from Hindu hegemony in India, it will be most unnatural for Pakistan's ruling classes to try to conquer India by force. They cannot hope to hold down the majority of Hindus by force; they will not invite the headache of the dreaded Hindu hegemony. So we can reasonably rule out Pakistan's objective of conquest of India by aggression. Pakistan, being a comparatively small country, is suffering from the big neighbour syndrome. Even since its inception, Pakistan is obsessed with the fear of India. The cry of Akhand Hindustan raised by chauvinistic Hindu groups

has increased the fears of Pakistan. Thus, the sole obsession of Pakistan has been to ensure the integrity and security of Pakistan. Its efforts to join alliances with the West, with China and with neighbouring Muslim nations, its effort to get a friendly government in Afghanistan, its efforts to secure military supplies and to attain nuclear capability are solely motivated by desire to deter Indian "aggression" and to secure defence in depth.<sup>4</sup>

At the time of partition, Muslim Indians, even though they had choice, opted to stay in India trusting in the Indian leadership that Muslims would be allowed to live in security, freedom, peace and honour. Such people are not at all likely to endanger the stability and security of India thereby endangering their own safety. They are least likely to favour conquest of India by Pakistan. In a conflict with Pakistan, when the chips are down, Muslim Indians, in their own self-interest, will be on the side of India. They will naturally wish Pakistan well and feel happy at the success of Pakistanis in any field of activity. But, in a conflict between India and Pakistan, they will naturally side their own country. The charges of disloyalty, of acting as fifth columnist are palpably false and are a calumny floated to defame them. The only bone of contention between India and Pakistan is Kashmir. Rightly or wrongly Pakistan felt it was cheated out of Kashmir by India. In its frustration, Pakistan foolishly tried to grab Kashmir by force. It was time and again checkmated by India and got dismembered in the process. So, it is not at all likely to attempt another invasion of Kashmir.

Pakistan is certainly fishing in troubled waters in Kashmir. This is really intended to force India into a compromise regarding the territorial integrity of Pakistan. Let us not forget that Kashmiri Muslims under Shaik Abdulla's leadership fought side by side with Indian troops against Pakistani invasion. It should be a matter of deep introspection for all Indians, how India could alienate the Muslims of Kashmir. The same thing happened in Bangladesh which was helped by India to win freedom. The prime reason is the machinations and activities of some people in India. India's ethos favours religious harmony and friendship with Pakistan, which will ensure peace in Asia and the world and prevent neo-colonialism of the Third World by the West. The prize for peace with Pakistan is so great and the peril of conflict is so grave that all sober Indians should deeply ponder over Indo-Pak relations afresh.<sup>5</sup>

India and Pakistan on September 3, 1992 failed yet again to break the ice on Kashmir but Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Nawaz Sharif

resolved to continue efforts to "overcome the set-backs" in bilateral relations.

At their fourth meeting in the past one year, something unprecedented in the course of bilateral relations, the Pakistani Prime Minister stuck to his stand on seeking a solution to the Kashmir issue on the basis of the United Nations (UN) resolution.

"I still maintain this position", Sharif remarked after his much awaited 75-minute breakfast meeting with Rao in Jakarta.

Rao candidly stated, we have to realise the fact" of set-backs in bilateral relations. Describing his talks with Sharif as "cordial", Rao said "we still feel that we have to continue our efforts", not expecting any immediate or instantaneous success.

Virtually echoing Rao's thoughts, the Pakistani leader remarked, "we have to overcome the setbacks."

Sharif said there was an urge on both sides to resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully and through negotiations. "I hope we will be able to make some headway in this regard", Sharif said.

Senior Indian officials saw no optimism after the meeting but perceived on both sides a conviction that the dialogue must continue.

Rao in reply to Sharif's letter received in August 1992 had ruled out any discussions on Kashmir under the UN resolutions. He had reportedly referred to India seeking a solution to bilateral problems with Pakistan strictly under the Simla accord.

Rao told newsmen that he had raised the question of Pakistan supplying arms to terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. But he did not reveal Sharif's reaction. The Indian Prime Minister also took up the issue of the Pakistani National Assembly resolution on the Babri Masjid tangle.

Sharif, on his part, explained the background and the circumstances under which the Pakistani House had passed the resolution. On illegal border-crossing, he assured that Pakistan would do its best to see that things did not get out of hand.

The leaders agreed that senior official-level talks on the Siachen issue, the Tulbul navigation project, the demarcation of the maritime boundary in the Sir Creek area and framing new ground-rules for security forces on the border would be held between September and December.

A series of these meetings will culminate in the next round of foreign secretary-level talks in Islamabad, possibly in December 1992.

Meanwhile, NAM's Political Committee has accepted India's position on the issue of terrorism, that all member-states fulfil their obligations

to international law and refrain from organising, instigating, and assisting in terrorist acts in other countries. An Indian note has been accepted with minor changes and would now form part of the NAM declaration.

The Indian side took the stand that member-countries should not encourage terrorists in their own countries to commit terrorism in other countries. India strongly pursued its position in the Committee meetings in view of continuing support to terrorists in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan.

The palpable failure of breakfast meeting on September 3, 1992 between Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif at Jakarta to make any headway towards resolving the Kashmir dispute comes as no surprise. Ever since Sharif had raised the Kashmir issue in his opening speech at the Jakarta NAM summit it had become quite clear that his meeting with Rao would be a meaningless exercise. The Pakistan Prime Minister's remarks on Kashmir were calculated to raise Indian hackles, and the controversy no doubt cast its shadow on the 75-minute breakfast that the two leaders shared together. In fact, Rao after his meeting with Sharif went to the extent of candidly admitting that there had been a "setback" to the negotiation process between the two countries. The Pakistan Prime Minister offered fresh provocation by asserting immediately after his meeting with Rao that he was committed to seeking a solution to the Kashmir dispute on the basis of UN resolutions.

This was the fifth meeting between Rao and Sharif in just one year, a record of kinds in encounters between prime ministers of the two countries. Unfortunately, the frequency of these meetings have in no way reflected a genuine bid to improve bilateral relations. If anything, Jakarta meeting has only served to underline the unwillingness of the Indian and Pakistani leadership to seek an end to the Kashmir imbroglio. Much of the blame for this must be shared by Islamabad which has deliberately stoked the fires of confrontation by blowing hot and cold over Kashmir. It is ironical that less than a fortnight before Sharif made his provocative speech at the NAM summit, the Pakistan Foreign Secretary Sharyar Khan was in New Delhi waxing eloquent on how Islamabad has finally decided to give up on the UN resolutions and discuss Kashmir as a bilateral issue under the Shimla Agreement. Although he later tried to wriggle out of this statement, Khan gave no indication whatsoever during his talks in New Delhi that his Prime Minister was intending to take a diametrically opposite stand at Jakarta. While the Government did well to react cautiously to Khan's overtures, which have now been patently exposed as diplomatic doublespeak, there is no need for New Delhi to over-react to provocations from Islamabad. More than ever, there is need for the Government to hold out the olive

branch to Pakistan and seek a step by step settlement to Kashmir and other issues. This may ultimately be the best way to expose the churlish games being played by the Pakistani leadership.<sup>6</sup>

Nearly all the students of literature are familiar with the classical definition of 'tragedy'. It visualises tragedy as consisting in a man in high state falling to a low state, and his consequent suffering. In a dramatised way, 'tragedy' was supposed to lead to a 'catharsis' of the people watching it, by exciting their emotions of piety and fear and thereby cleansing them. Since this classical definition, tragedy has been interpreted in diverse ways and its scope has enlarged considerably. George Bernard Shaw saw tragedy, both in the non-fulfilment of one's ambition as also in its fruition or completion. However, no precise definition exists - none to my knowledge at least - of mass tragedy, a tragedy brought about in a collective manner by a whole set of people, say, for instance, a class or a tribe or a subnationality. This last-mentioned phenomenon is currently being enacted in the Kashmir valley with the inexorability and the inevitability of a Greek Tragedy. This Tragedy does not consist only in murder, mutilation and mayhem which currently happens to be the order of the day in that benighted place. It runs deeper into the psyche and the mental being of the people. Murder need not always be tragic; it can be sad and pathetic. Dwelling houses set to the torch with the fiendish, sadistic joy generated by the accomplishment of vengeance can be rebuilt. Physical aspects of the tragedy are reparable, though all mental and physical wounds do not heal. A false scab forms over their graping mouths; and within, they fester painfully. The most gruesome aspect of the tragedy of Kashmir is, to any mind, the irreparable damage that has been and is still being caused to the intellectual, academic and the resultant cultural life of the generation which is just burgeoning into youth and which will have to endure and suffer the loss of the mental 'opening up' which was just beginning to take place in the Valley. Kashmir has had a vast and profound intellectual life in its illustrious past. However, the intellectual activities and cerebral outpourings were limited to theological subjects. The musings were mystical and esoteric, and were expressed in convoluted and involved intuitive logic. This genius did flower, rarely though, in the secular fields like dramaturgy, but compared to the Greek philosophy there was hardly any secular philosophy. That, however, is not germane to the present subject. The fact is that intellectual activity, though it was confined to a microscopic elite, existed throughout with Kashmiri interpreters of the Buddhists; Pali scriptures were sent to places like Lhasa and the Far East to be taught and propagated.<sup>7</sup>

During the medieval period, even this high-flown theological literature had to suffer a decline. It, however, lurked in certain restricted quarters which became the seats of obscurantism and backwardness and acted as a brake in the flowering of the genius of the people in both the sciences, social and natural. The establishment of a university in Kashmir opened up a new window on the higher reaches of academic knowledge and research. Mercifully, the insular narrowness of the Kashmiri was not allowed to come in the way and bright and creative academicians, and scholars from outside Kashmir were either appointed as vice-chancellors, or in the diverse faculties, or came as visiting professors and participants in seminars. Almost every faculty held seminars on subjects which were of classical or contemporary relevance. By and large, an atmosphere of intellectual ferment developed within the university campus in which this writer also actively participated. This entire process of the unfolding of the high Kashmiri "intelligence quotient" raised hopes of the closed minds of the people in general - and the young generation in particular - opening up, and in due course of time supplanting the few remaining centres of fundamentalist and morbidly conservative outlook which have been using the madarsas as the focal points of the dissemination of religious numbo-jumbo, which is so exclusive and irrelevant to the current pattern of education and backward-looking.

In fact, this drawing of inspiration from the past has been too baneful a characteristic of eastern societies, especially of Muslims. Kashmir had remained a closed, almost a sealed place, till the middle-ages. According to Al Beruni, the historian who accompanied Mohammad Ghaznavi to India, nobody was allowed to enter Kashmir in the 11th century except the Jews. This sequesteredness restricted the enrichment of the Kashmiri academic outpourings and made the people insular and narrow of vision.<sup>8</sup>

Eduardo Faleiro, Minister of State for External Affairs, was forcing an issue with the West when he asked the UN to oppose state-sponsored terrorism from abroad. Meanwhile, the right to self-determination, he declared, did not apply to integral parts of sovereign nations and rejected the view canvassed that humanitarian assistance could be used to interfere with the internal affairs of a state in the name of human rights. Though he did not name any country, the reference clearly was to Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and its insistence on a plebiscite there. The message, of course, was to the West which was portraying Kashmir as a human rights issue and linking it with self-determination. Faleiro's address to the General Assembly might serve the immediate purpose of strengthening sections of the Bush Administration

advocating a hardline against Pakistan. Pakistan has already been warned by the State Department that it was close to declaring it a "State that supports terrorism", which means it would be treated at par with Libya and Syria. But there seems to be a dichotomy in the US approach because three senators, including John Glenn, have expressed concern at reports that the State Department was considering arms-sale a violation of the Pressler Amendment. Pakistan has not been getting US aid since October 1990 because presidential certification on its nuclear status has not been forthcoming. However, there have been instances of overzealous officials breaking the law, for instance in the case of Iran leading to the Contra scandal. The Bush Administration has, nevertheless, admitted that it is permitting limited commercial arms-sale, while the senators think it to be a violation of the Pressler Amendment.<sup>9</sup>

Of late, both the US and the UK, have shown a measure of understanding of India's position on Pakistani involvement in the Kashmir insurgency. But unless statements are made in public, Islamabad's mischief cannot be stopped. The Human Rights Commission that India has announced will look into complaints of excesses. If the US perceives Kashmir as a source of regional nuclear arms-race, it should match its concern with tangible steps and not link the basic issue with human rights and self-determination as Pakistan is trying to get the West to do. The UN consistent with the principles of its Charter can only oppose terrorism aided, abetted or sponsored from abroad. It cannot declare Pakistan a terrorism-sponsoring state. But individual nations convinced of Pakistani involvement in terrorism in India can act to do so.<sup>10</sup>

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix - 1

### KASHMIR PROBLEM ISLAMIC: IRAN

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The Iranian president, Mr Akbar Hashmi Rafsanjani, on September 7, 1992 said in Islamabad his country had a "complaint" against the United Nations for not implementing the resolutions on Kashmir.

Addressing a joint session of Pakistan Parliament, Mr Rafsanjani said Teheran shared Islamabad's concern over the Kashmir issue and felt "this is an Islamic problem".

Mr Rafsanjani lashed out at the "western powers" for strengthening Israel militarily and, at the same time, denying both Iran and Pakistan the defence hardware for which the two countries had made payments.

Mr Rafsanjani did not make any direct reference to the United States but felt that Islamabad was being denied military assistance over suspicion about its nuclear programme while Iran was being refused defence equipment on the charge that it was "spreading fundamentalism".

Mr Rafsanjani, who reached Islamabad on September 6 afternoon on a four-day visit to Pakistan, told the joint sitting that the "threats are directed towards us (Iran and Pakistan.) The excuses are different but the realities the same".

During his 25-minute speech in Persian, Mr Rafsanjani said the western powers did not want Pakistan to be converted into an economic power with self-reliance in the field of defence. The same was the case with Iran, he said.

The leaders of the opposition in the National Assembly, Ms Benazir Bhutto listened to the address of the Iranian leader but boycotted the thanks giving speech of the Prime Minister, Mr Nawas Sharif, protesting against

the Government's decision not to allow her to welcome Mr Rafsanjani during the joint sitting.

In his thanks giving speech, the Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, appreciated Iran's concern over issues agitating Pakistan.

## Appendix - 2

### NO COMPROMISE ON KASHMIR : BHATIA

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The Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr R.L. Bhatia, on September 10, 1992 said in Amritsar that Kashmir was an integral part of India and there would be no compromise on the issue.

Addressing newsmen in Amritsar he said while discussing the Kashmir issue India could not ignore the question of the Pak-occupied Kashmir.

Expressing regret over Pakistan's move to project Kashmir as an Islamic problem, Mr Bhatia said that India had told the countries who were relating the issue with religion that Kashmir was a bilateral problem and could only be solved through talks between the two countries concerned.

He said these countries had been informed of India's stand on Kashmir which could only be discussed under the Simla agreement.

He said India had been successful in building favourable world opinion particularly in the Western countries on the issue. A number of nations had openly singled out Pakistan for its role in training and abetting terrorism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

Replying to a question the Minister said that in order to divert attention of the Pakistani people from that country the leaders there from time to time made irresponsible statements on Kashmir which only heightened the tension between the two nations. "In Pakistan a leader must project a tough stand on Kashmir if he or she wants to stay in power", he added.

Referring to the Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao's meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif at Jakarta during the Non-Aligned Movement summit, Mr Bhatia said that this was the fifth meeting between the two leaders which showed that there was always room for negotiations. He however, regretted Pakistan's move to raise the Kashmir

issue at the summit as this was essentially a bilateral issue concerning the two nations.

The Minister did not agree to the view that there should be no discussions on Kashmir with Pakistan. "This will only weaken our stand at the international forum and would be a clear violation of the Simla pact," he said.

Mr Bhatia said that it was only through mutual discussions that the two nations had succeeded in evolving a code of conduct for diplomats following an assault on an Indian diplomat in Islamabad a few months ago.

Similarly the two countries had also agreed to inform each other about military exercises on either side of the border, he added.

Mr Bhatia said that India had always been eager to improve its relations with its neighbours and with the exception of Pakistan a healthy rapport had been established with all neighbouring nations. China was one such example, he added.

Replying to a question on Indo-Pak clashes on the Siachen Glacier the Minister said not much headway had been made to stop the conflict on the world's highest battle ground, but discussions were still on and during the next round of talks this issue would be discussed on a priority basis he added.

## Appendix - 3

### KASHMIRI MIGRANTS Concern over Delay in relief

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Kashmiri Hindu migrant organisations on September 10, 1992 have expressed concern over the continuing delay in the payment of relief to the migrants whose houses have been set ablaze by the militants back in the Valley.

According to the All India Kashmiri Samaj and Panun Kashmir, Jammu nearly 4,000 houses of Kashmir had been ransacked and all belongings including permanent fixtures like water taps electric fittings and wardrobes removed. The organisation regretted that repeated pleas by migrant Kashmiris that their properties be protected had fallen on deaf ears and now steps to save these properties had been taken so far.

## Appendix - 4

### **'POLLS NOT POSSIBLE IN KASHMIR NOW'**

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Bharatiya Janata Party vice-president, Mr Sunder Singh Bhandari on September 11, 1992 said in Varanasi, U.P. said the situation in the Kashmir Valley was not favourable for holding elections.

Talking to newsmen in Varanasi Mr Bhandari warned that if elections were held in the Valley, power would go to the hands of pro-Pakistani forces.

He said the Hindus who had migrated from the Kashmir Valley due to terrorism should be rehabilitated there first and assured full protection. A peaceful atmosphere should be created in the Valley, he stressed.

He said his party favoured the formation of three regional councils in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, giving them all powers including financial and administrative. He alleged that 80 per cent of the funds which had so far been allotted to the Valley were misused.

Replying to a question Mr Bhandari said the participation of people in large numbers in the Punjab municipal elections was a positive sign.

Mr Bhandari said Pakistan was still giving arms training and sophisticated weapons to terrorists and sending them. The Kashmir Valley for sabotage. He asked the Union Government not to have any kind of dialogue with Pakistan till it stopped training and supplying arms to terrorists.

Asked about the formation of a separate Jharkhand state, Mr Bhandari said his party was against it. A state created on the basis of fundamentalism was not acceptable to him, he added.

Mr Bhandari said his party favoured the creation of Banaanchal state in Bihar. He alleged that tribal areas in Bihar were still neglected and no developmental programmes had been taken up there.

In reply to another question, Mr Bhandari said the Uttar Pradesh Government had taken effective steps to deal with terrorism but it was not getting support.

## Appendix - 5

### JAGMOHAN FOR REPEAL OF ARTICLE 370

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Former Jammu and Kashmir governor, Mr Jagmohan has made a fervent plea for repeal of Article 370 of the Constitution, which grants special status to the state, since "in it lies the root of creating a separatist sentiment".

Delivering a lecture on in Bhopal, on August 26, 1992 on the 'Kashmir problem and solution', Mr Jagmohan said the biggest myth about the Article was that it was in the interest of the common man of that troubled state. He said this special provision granted privileges only to the elite of Jammu and Kashmir, who were not required to pay wealth tax and gift tax under it.

He said it was primarily because of this Article that three lakh Kashmiris had become refugees in their own country and added that the Indian government was not worried about them although it was fighting for the rights of Palestinians and South Africans.

Reiterating that the common man in Kashmir was not in favour of the Article, which helped only the rich, he said that when he was governor he had extended 29 Indian laws to the state, which were not applicable there earlier.

Mr Jagmohan said no civilisation can allow an Article like 370 to be part of a Constitution since it was "antiquated and primitive".

He said no solution to the Kashmir problem could be found unless the younger generation made a deep study of the mistakes committed there since 1947.

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He said that the problems of Kashmir were complex and pointed out that unless the mistakes committed there were studied deeply, the country's map could not be finalised.

Mr Jagmohan said it was wrong to say that Jammu and Kashmir was part of India only because of Article 370 and added that the State had long played a role in the country's history and culture.

In his hour-long lecture, he said a solution to the Kashmir problem could be found even now by exerting sustained pressure on the militants, eliminating pro-Pakistan elements and offering a line of retreat to the moderates.

The former governor said that any talk of holding elections would be meaningless and counter-productive unless the government's control was established in the state.

He alleged that funds meant for development were passed on to militants and added that this could not be reversed unless the government established its authority there.

## Appendix - 6

### PM FAILED TO PROJECT STAND ON J&K: JOSHI

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BJP PRESIDENT Murli Manohar Joshi came down heavily on Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao for failing to present India's views on Kashmir at the NAM conference at Jakarta, Indonesia and losing the initiative to Pakistan on the international platform.

The BJP President also called for complete freedom to the JPC probing the scam. As a first step, he called for the resignation of the RBI Governor.

Dr Joshi, who returned on September 7, 1992 from a European tour and is in Bombay for Ganesh Utsav, told journalists that what transpired at the recently concluded NAM conference proved that the Government had failed in its diplomatic efforts.

Said Joshi: "We thought that the Prime Minister would make use of the NAM platform to tell the international community and NAM in particular about our stand on Kashmir.

We thought that whatever Pakistan would do he would manage to get support against the Pak moves."

But, according to Dr Joshi, this did not happen. "Merely asking Pakistan not to internationalise the Kashmir issue is not enough," he pointed out. The BJP leader said that Pakistan had grabbed the opportunity to internationalise the problem and to "link the Kashmir problem with Muslim fundamentalism".

He also said that on his tour abroad he was told by people he met that the Indian embassies were not providing information or literature about Kashmir.

## Appendix 7

### PAKISTAN AND ISLAMIC MILITANTS

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Pakistan is ordering an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 Islamic militants, mainly from Arab countries, to leave the country by February 15, 1993.

Sources said that a plan was drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Interior to remove all such groups by mid-February.

"The Government of Pakistan has been urged to stop the activities of militants in Kashmir or risk being placed on the terrorist list", State Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mohammad Siddique Khan told the National Assembly.

Various private Afghan groups residing in the North-West Frontier Province are allegedly providing support for rebels in India's Kashmir.

Several Arab countries have also complained that some militant groups based in Pakistan are trying to destabilise their Governments and have demanded that Islamabad curb on their activities.

Hundreds of militants from Egypt, Algeria, Sudan and other Arab countries, who came to Pakistan to join the Jihad (holy war) during the Afghan Civil war, are still believed to be using Pakistan as an operational base.

Dr Yousry Hammed, regional director of the Afghan support committee and *Jamait Al Ihiaa Al Torath Al Islami*, said actually the pressure came from outside on the Government of Pakistan about some problems, especially the presence of some Arab brothers, and there was the Kashmir situation".



The Arab organisations deny that they are involved in the Kashmir rebellion and insist they are engaged in humanitarian activities to help Afghan refugees.

Abdullah Baramat of the Jordanian non-Government organisation, *Lajnat Al Dawa Al Islamiah*, said his group was in Pakistan to help the refugees. He said the group is doing a "good job".

There were nearly two million Afghan refugees in Pakistan during the height of the war. However, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says that more than 1.5 million refugees have returned home since 1990.

## Appendix - 8

### SURJEET FOR 'PROPER KASHMIR POLICY'

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Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet has called for a proper Kashmir policy to be followed by the Centre to ensure that the identity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir will be safeguarded and grievances against the militants and security forces redressed.

In a signed article in the *People's Democracy*, (August 31, 1992) the CPI (M) journal, Mr Surjeet has expressed concern at the deteriorating situation in the state. He said India was not expected to receive any support on the issue from the Islamic countries and the erstwhile socialist nations while the non-aligned countries were not so intense in pleading India's cause.

The situation in the Kashmir Valley had worsened as the 40,000 police force and a large number of government servants receiving salaries and enjoying other facilities from the government were not cooperating with it in tackling military. Mr Surjeet said.

The CPI (M) leader said the Pakistan foreign secretary's statement at Delhi that the Kashmir issue should be resolved under the Simla Agreement was given wide publicity by the media. But the clarification given by him the next day revealed that there was no change in Pakistan's policy on Kashmir, he said.

It was a rebuff to those who had entertained the faint hope that Pakistan has come to realise the necessity of improving relations with India.

Pakistan was abetting the Mujahideen who along with the Jamiat-e-Islami were dominating the Kashmir Valley. A number of JKLF leaders

had been killed by the Mujahideen while the Jamait was busy preaching fundamentalist ideas, he said.

To make the matter worse, many of the 40,000 police personnel in the state were "collaborating" with the extremists.

## Appendix - 9

### RAFSANJANI FOR ISLAMIC UNITY

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on September 7, 1992 (Islamabad) condemned recent factional fighting in Afghanistan as barbaric and warned that reconstruction of his war-ravaged neighbour would take at least 20 years.

"In Afghanistan people kill each other. This belongs to the barbaric period to the Dark Ages.... They will not be able to offer any answer to God," Rafsanjani said in an address to a joint session of Pakistan's Parliament, Islamabad.

Hailing Islam as the world's most powerful unifying force against "arrogant western powers", the Iranian President called for an end to differences between Shi'ite and Sunni, between Pashtun and Persian.

"We are all Muslim brothers," he said to vigorous applause.

Rafsanjani arrived on in Islamabad, on September 6, 1992 for a four-day visit and talks likely to focus on last month's bloody battles in Kabul between dissident Hezb-i-Islami chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pashtun, and the four-month-old Islamic Government.

He described the battles as a result of "the ignorance and immorality of those who fight each other over nothing" - a veiled attack against Hekmatyar who subjected Kabul to three weeks of blistering rocket assaults in which 2,000 people died.

"Whoever takes responsibility for Afghanistan, we should kiss his hand," Rafsanjani said, adding that it was no easy task to govern a nation emerging from a 14-year war.

He said Iran was not interfering in Afghanistan and denied reports Pakistan and Iran were competing for influence there.

"No one has an ambition to interfere unless he is crazy and wants to lose his own life." Rafsanjani told Parliament.

Rafsanjani is returning a visit by Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to Iran in 1991. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went to Teheran last February.

He is to meet the President and the Prime Minister for talks that are also expected to touch on the Economic Cooperation Organisation, set up by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey in 1985 and since joined by Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Rafsanjani is to visit the old city of Lahore before leaving for China on September 9, 1991.

## Appendix - 10

### 'SECULARISM' MUCH -DISTORTED CONCEPT

At a panel discussion on "Secularism - Politicians and the Press", organised by the Citizen's Forum New Delhi, on August 25, 1992 speakers came out strongly in favour of an open debate on the definition of the term "Secularism", that they claimed had been systematically "distorted" since the death of Sardar Patel in the early fifties.

The speakers were Bharatiya Janata Party stalwart L.K. Advani, Congress leader Vasant Sathe and joint general secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) K.C. Sudershan. Chandan Mitra, Swapan Dasgupta and Balbir Punj spoke on behalf of the press.

Not surprisingly, the panelists were not at odds when it came to acknowledge the "fact" that the definition of the term "secularism" as propagated by the "pseudo-secularists" (Advani said there are many in the Congress, but graciously excluded Sathe from the tribe) was not the "right one". Even Sathe, who stressed that the terms "Hindu" and "Indian" were foisted upon the country by alien invaders and as such should not be used to score a point, agreed that "Secularism" as defined now was a distorted definition.

The discussion was a lively one. The speakers traced back the history, the nation's and the world's, to highlight how, over the years since Independence, the people of the country were fed on a diet of "Secularism" that suited the interests of the ruling party of the day. And every one of the panelists, including Sathe, didn't leave any one in doubt as to which party they were referring to.

The two politicians also found themselves in total agreement on the need to "do something about Article 30". If the Muslims can teach Quran

to youngsters in "madarsas" (Islamic Schools) and the fables of the Bible is essential reading in missionary schools, then the "vachans" of the Bhagwat Gita should be made compulsory in other schools, was Advani's observation. Sathe said the term "Secularism" was distorted with the inclusion of Article 30 in the Constitution.

In fact, if ever the word "Secularism" was discussed threadbare it was on Tuesday. Yet at the end of it all, though every one agreed that the term had been "systematically distorted", no one could come up with a definition that was free of any "distortion".

The speakers criticised the tendency, since Independence, among a vast section of the Indian elites to consider anything with even a tinge of "Hindu culture" as being "anti-secular" and therefore against the Constitution. Swapan Dasgupta said the tendency was still prevalent, despite the winds of change since 1989.

Chandan Mitra spoke at length on how "Secularism" came to have a different connotation after the distortions that crept in after the death of Sardar Patel. He said over the years it was Nehru's "Secularism" that came to be accepted among the country's elites, at the expense of Mahatma Gandhi's. Nehru propagated the belief (and managed to foist that on the State and the people) that people should be "kept away from the influence of religion" while Gandhi wanted man (Hindu or Muslim) to be close to God.

K C Sudershan considered Secularism not suited for India as it was a European concept. Balbir Punj urged the press to play an active role in initiating a debate on "Secularism".

## Appendix - 11

### PAKISTAN TO RAISE KASHMIR ISSUE IN SECURITY COUNCIL

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Siddiq Khan Kanju on May 19, 1992 informed the National Assembly that Pakistan is considering to raise the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council.

Replying to a question by Mohammad Yasin Khan Wattoo during the "question hour" he said, the Kashmir issue is being raised at various international forums to build up momentum before raising it at the Security Council.

He said the issue has been raised by the IJI Government from time to time at various international forums including the Third Committee of the General Assembly which deals with the social, humanitarian and cultural issues, the UN Human Rights Commission, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Economic and Social Council, Inter Parliamentary Union, meeting of Non-aligned Movement and the Commonwealth.

Mr. Kanju said at the 48th session of the UN General Assembly from January to March 1992, Pakistan delegation highlighted the human rights violations in Kashmir and called for the free exercise of their right of self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.

During the 46th session of the UN General Assembly from September to December 1991, he said the issue was also raised.

He said letters have also been written to the UN Secretary General from time to time to notice the human rights violations in the Indian occupied Kashmir.

Mr. Kanju informed the House that the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference held at Dakar in December 1991, adopted a strong and forthright resolution about Kashmir. The resolution condemned the massive viola-

tion of human rights of the Kashmiri people and called for the respect of their human rights including the right of self-determination, he added.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs said the Pakistan delegation to the tenth ministerial meeting of the non-aligned countries held at Accra (Ghana) from September 4 to 7, 1991, highlighted the human rights violations in Kashmir.

At the Commonwealth heads of government meeting held in Harare in October 1991, Mr. Kanju said, the Prime Minister informed the participating leaders that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was an outstanding issue between India and Pakistan. The Prime Minister also called upon the international community not to apply human rights standards selectively but to raise its voice whenever and wherever such violations occurred, he added.

He said: "In our bilateral talks with India, we will continue to emphasise the importance of the Kashmir dispute as the core issue between Pakistan and India, which must be resolved through faithful implementation of the UN resolutions."

He urged the Indian government to start a purposeful dialogue with Pakistan for the settlement of Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions and in the spirit of Simla Agreement.

Mr. Kanju reiterated that the Government would spare no effort in projecting the Kashmir issue internationally. He said: "Pakistan would persevere in its endeavours to raise internationally the level of awareness about the Kashmir issue keeping in sharp focus the human rights violations in Indian Occupied Kashmir".

## Appendix - 12

### PAKISTAN FOR PURPOSEFUL TALKS WITH INDIA ON KASHMIR—KANJU

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Pakistan has called upon India to begin, "a purposeful dialogue", with Pakistan "to resolve the outstanding Kashmir problem, on the basis of the UN resolutions and in the spirit of the Simla Agreement".

This was impressed upon the Indian External Affairs Minister Eduardo Faleiro by Pakistan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Siddiq Khan Kanju during their meeting in Bali, Indonesia in May 1992.

The two Foreign Ministers were in Bali representing their respective countries at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial meeting.

"Unless the core issue of Kashmir is resolved in a peaceful manner, the objective of establishing tension-free relations between the two countries will remain elusive," Mr. Kanju emphatically said.

Mr. Kanju underlined Pakistan's resolve to settle this dispute peacefully and stressed that it was now time for India to introduce some fresh thinking in its Kashmir policy.

Talking to foreign journalists and media representatives Mr. Kanju stated that political leadership in India and Pakistan was "committed to the economic development and social uplift of their peoples and resolution of the Kashmir dispute would enable them to focus their attention fully on this urgent task".

He stated that Mr. Faleiro agreed that both countries needed to cooperate with each other for improving the standards of living of their peoples. He suggested that "the channel of communication between India and Pakistan should be kept open".

On Afghanistan, Mr. Kanju said on his return to Islamabad, the NAM communique contained a reference to the establishment of a new Islamic and Non-Aligned government in Afghanistan "which would contribute to preparing the ground for people's participation in the future political system of the country".

## Appendix - 13

### INDIA READY TO GIVE PAK A BEFITTING REPLY: PAWAR

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DEFENCE MINISTER Sharad Pawar said in Varanasi, on September 3, 1992 India was fully prepared to give a befitting reply to Pakistan if it indulged in actions, which were against the security and integrity of our country.

"India would teach a lesson to Pakistan. Not only its present generation but future generation would remember it for a long (time)," he said addressing a meet-the-press programme at Paradkar Bhawan Varanasi after unveiling a portrait of the late Congress(I) leader, Kamalapati Tripathi on his 88th birth anniversary.

Referring to the resolution in Pakistan National Assembly on the Ram Janmabhumi-Babri Masjid issue, he said it was a clear intervention in the internal affairs of India.

"Pakistan should avoid such things. Such actions affected the bilateral relations", he said.

Speaking at a public rally in Chandauli, some 30 km from here, he said normalcy would return in Jammu and Kashmir within six months since security forces were determined to flush out militants.

The border areas were completely sealed in Jammu and Kashmir to check the infiltration of Pak-trained militants, he said.

## Appendix - 14

### RAO INVITED TO VISIT PAKISTAN

Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, on September 3, 1992 invited his Indian counterpart, P.V. Narasimha Rao, to visit Pakistan to discuss the Kashmir issue.

In a statement on his return from Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Jakarta, Sharif said he invited Rao during a meeting on September 3.

"He did not say no", Sharif said.

Sharif called for "meaningful and substantive dialogue" with India on Kashmir.

The last Indian Prime Minister to visit Pakistan was Rajiv Gandhi who came for a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit in 1988. The last Indian Prime Minister to make an official visit to Pakistan for bilateral talks was Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1960s.

## Appendix - 15

### JKLF-HIZBUL UNITE TO FACE INDIAN ARMY CRACKDOWN

WHILE the State Government claims success in controlling terrorism in the Valley, rival pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen and the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front have vowed to unite to fight their "common enemy, India, and undo the 1947 instrument of secession."

The JKLF and Hizbula patch-up was brought about by several prominent citizens, who advised them against squandering their energies, thus a "new era of understanding among the militant groups fighting for the liberation of Kashmir," has begun.

Earlier, on September 4, 1992 Hizbul Advisor General Abdul Majid Dar and JKLF chief Javed Mir had charged each other of working against the *Jehad* Mr Dar had said the JKLF had killed one of their boys Akhtar Rasool and set fire to a Jammat- e-Islami office and an Islamic library. JKLF leaders on the other hand held Hizbul responsible for liquidation of its activists.

The patch-up came to light recently, when militant leaders found that fresh supplies of arms and ammunition were not reaching them because of the operations of Indian jawans in border areas.

More than 116 Pakistan-trained militants were killed in encounters in August. These included 30 hard-core terrorists and area commanders of Hizbul and JkLF. Several boxes containing 58,867 rounds of ammunition, 390 weapons, 13 LMGs and UMGs, 334 AK 47 rifles, 12 RPG and 15 rocket launchers were seized during searches in the valley. Over 30,000 ammunition rounds of AK 47 rifles in 13 boxes and 165 rifles being smuggled into India were held at the Line of Control.



The Government has also claimed the arrest of 876 subversives, including some self-styled area commanders, deputy chief and other important functionaries of various militant outfits taking the number of arrested to over 5,000.

However, the screening committee headed by the Director General of Police released 39 detainees and 1,451 alleged subversives on bail. Efforts are on to rehabilitate jobless youth.

Official sources confirm that Pakistan rangers were trying to push in a larger number of trained youth through difficult mountain passes along the 400 km LAC. Security forces, however, succeeded in nabbing a dozen of them, while 20 others were shot dead by a BSF party on the border. The three-line vigil makes infiltration difficult, if not possible, they added.

In Poonch district, the Pakistan Army kidnapped 76 Muslims last year during the Kirni operation. Abdul Majid, who returned later, disclosed that the youth were being forcibly trained in subversive activities and the rest of their family members supplied 11 kg free ration and Rs 450 per month, which was stopped later.

Jamait-ul-Mujahideen, a fundamentalist outfit, has asked all foreign nationals to leave Kashmir within a week or face dire consequences. According to it, a large number of foreigners were visiting the Valley despite direction to the contrary from their respective embassies. It suspects they are Indian agents. Local tour operators however, have resented the ban saying it would further harm them economically.

Hizbul has also warned local journalists against writing anything which would harm the *Jehad*. Majid Dar has asked them to play the role of a watch dog for the movement and never work for the 'enemy', for which they would be punished. Several nationalists living in the security zone in Srinagar have been supplied guards like National Conference, CPM and Congress leaders.

Jamat, Hizbul, Ikwahan, Allah Tigers, Alumhar and other Pro-Pakistan outfits, no doubt, have an upper hand compared to the JKLF because of the Pakistan Army's support to these outfits.

## Appendix - 16

### KASHMIR ISSUE AT THE NAM BHUTAN DISAPPROVES ROLE OF SHARIF

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Bhutan has disapproved of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif raking up the Kashmir issue at the NAM summit, endorsing India's stand that bilateral issues should not be brought up at NAM forums.

Bhutan's views on the issue were conveyed to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao by Bhutan Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering who called on him on September 4, 1992 for an exchange of views on bilateral matters and the situation in the region.

An official spokesman said Rao had advised Bhutan to resolve the explosive issue of alleged discrimination of people of Nepali origin with Nepal bilaterally through discussions.

Mr Tsering had briefed Mr Rao about the on going talks between Bhutan and Nepal on this issue and said he would be soon going to Nepal for talks with the Nepalese Foreign Minister who had recently visited Thimphu for the same purpose.

There were about 40,000 people of Nepali origin in Bhutan who are reported to be facing hardships following persecution by the Bhutanese government.

Mr Rao told Mr Tsering that he was looking forward to the visit of Bhutan King Jigme Singye, Wangchuk to New Delhi in December.

## Appendix - 17

### QUESTION OF REFERENDUM IN KASHMIR

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An Indian participant in a non-government organisation conference at United Nations on September 11, 1992 evening took on what he said were clearly Pakistan-backed elements heaping allegations against India and invited Islamabad to vacate occupied parts of Kashmir before seeking a plebiscite.

"I am myself from the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. I come from the family of the 19th century glorious general Zorawar Singh who created the present boundaries of the state.

"There are no children being killed," or other atrocities committed by the authorities in the state, asserted Mr Bhim Singh, a former Kashmir legislator who is chairman of Non-aligned Congress.

In recent years, Pakistan backed Kashmiri groups have lobbied UN and other fora accusing India of violating Kashmiris' human rights. One such speaker sought to involve an NGO allied "doctors without borders" in Kashmir. The group has operated in Afghanistan and elsewhere dispensing medical aid.

As the three-day conference drew to a close, Mr Singh said he had silently watched "the activities of my brothers who claim to be from Jammu and Kashmir." He also circulated a statement elaborating his views. "Those who talk of human rights should give up AK-47 and then demand world support," he said and suggested that Pakistan be reprimanded by the NGO forum for sponsoring terrorism.

Mr Singh told fellow-participants he had confined his remarks to relevant issues but was addressing "this subject since the matter has been

raised repeatedly by my brothers." He said they were spreading venom and falsehood through their rhetoric and literature.

He detailed in his circulated statement examples of Pakistani-sponsored terrorist acts that have taken thousands of innocent lives and made life miserable for others.

He assailed Pakistan's record in parts of Kashmir it has occupied for almost 45 years, citing its casual treatment of Kashmiri leaders and attempts to alter the ethnic character of Gilgit.

He said, "if Pakistan is not sincere to the Simla Agreement, let her implement the first three parts of the UN resolution J and K. The question of holding a referendum will arise only after Pesawar vacates all occupied territories."

## Appendix - 18

### NOT AN ISLAMIC ISSUE: MUFTI

Former Union Home Minister, Mufti Mohammed Syed, on September 12, 1992 said the Iranian President, Mr Rafsanjani's recent remarks in Islamabad that the Kashmir issue was an "Islamic problem" amounted to interference in India's internal affairs.

Addressing a press conference in Bangalore Mr Syed said the Kashmir issue was never an Islamic problem. A 'courageous' change could be witnessed in the Kashmir people's attitude towards terrorism, he said, adding that the people were fed up with militancy.

He alleged that the Centre, instead of grabbing the opportunity to hold talks with all parties, including the Mujahiddin group and the JKLF, to thrash out a solution, was letting the chance drift.

Meanwhile, militants particularly the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahiddin group, were using the chance to resume attacks on security forces and the local population, he said. The Mujahiddins had also stepped up offensive against the pro- independence JKLF, which had accentuated blood-letting and brought terror into people's minds, he said.

Mr Syed said a delegation of the National Front and Left parties had recently submitted a package plan to Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, suggesting a solution to the Kashmir problem. Mr. Rao had responded favourably to the package but had not taken any initiative in this regard so far, he said.

Once normalcy was restored, anti-social elements separated and the migrants including Kashmir pandits returned to the state, holding of polls could be considered, he said. A solution to the issue could be found within the framework of the Constitution, which had provided special status to the state, he added.

He said the present situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan had vindicated the policy of the late leader, Sheikh Abdullah, to remain with India and not to accede to Pakistan at the time of independence.

Mr Syed said 'secessionist militancy' had of late proliferated to Doda district and some other areas of Jammu region, while the situation in the Kashmir Valley had also been deteriorating, he said.

## Appendix - 19

### CHINA FOR AMICABLE SOLUTION TO KASHMIR

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China on September 12, 1992 hoped that the Kashmir issue would be resolved in a "Just and reasonable manner through negotiations" between India and Pakistan.

Leader of a Chinese Communist Party delegation to India, Mr Wu Bangguo, who held an hour-long meeting with Minister of the state for External Affairs Mr. R.L. Bhatia, in New Delhi, also expressed optimism that India and Pakistan would be able to promote bonds of friendship through negotiations.

The ten-member Communist Party delegation has come to India at invitation of the ruling Congress Party.

The delegation had already met the Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, and also held extensive talks with the Congress leaders for Promoting Political and economic relation between the two countries.

The Chinese leader lauded economic reforms undertaken by India.

During the talks, Mr R.L. Bhatia gave a detailed account of India's efforts to improve relation with its neighbours. He said India's efforts in this regard had yielded positive results, but regretted that ties with Pakistan had not improved because of Islamabad's support to extremist and secessionist elements in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Bhatia also apprised Mr Wu Bangguo of India's commitment to promoting South-South relation through multilateral forums like SAARC and the Non-aligned Movement.

The Indian Minister said the NAM was yet to fulfil its economic objective of ensuring a better deal for the developing countries.

Mr Bhatia told Mr Wu that India's relations had improved satisfactorily with all its neighbours, except Pakistan.

He was of the view that the Non-aligned Movement was yet to fulfil its objective of ensuring a better deal for developing and under-developed countries in the economic sphere.

Mr Wau, who is secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee, also talked about the changes in the economic scenario in his country and its success in attracting a sizeable foreign investment of Shanghai and other parts of China.

Mr Bhatia listed steps taken by India as part of its drive to implement economic reforms in the country.

## Appendix - 20

### MILITANCY SPREADS IN JAMMU REGION

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Pakistan aided and abetted militancy which has by now engulfed the entire Kashmir Valley, is rapidly spreading in the Jammu region.

Militancy has already made its impact in the border districts of Rajouri-Poonch and is now proliferating in districts of Doda and Kathua. Jammu City too has been witnessing sporadic incidents of subversive activities.

Senior official dealing with the law and order situation in the Jammu region attribute the escalation militancy to the topographical position in the region, which is sandwiched between two terrorist zones of Punjab and Kashmir making it easier for militants to operate and carry out their subversive activities.

The IG of police, Jammu division, Mr S.S Wazir said in Jammu, on September 13, 1992 districts of Kathua, Jammu, Rajouri and Poonch in the region have proximity with borders of Pakistan giving additional advantage to militants to infiltrate, exfiltrate and smuggle arms and ammunition from across the line of control (LoC) and international border (IB.)

"There is no indigenous militant movement in the region as such. Subversive activities are limited to some areas while sporadic incidents are taking place in other parts of the region", Mr Wazir said.

The authorities however, are not complacent with all that has been happening and strategies to counter militancy were being revised from time to time, he said, adding that authorities were also getting positive support from all sections of the people in the province.

There has been about 130 bomb blasts, grenade attacks or firing incidents by militants in Jammu region in the past two years. In these incidents about 25 civilians and eighteen policemen and security force personnel were killed, according to official estimates.

But the major thrust of bomb blasts remained in Jammu City with as many as 50 bombs, including time bombs, exploding from time to time at sensitive places.

The militants initially struck in Jammu City at general bus stand about two years back by firing from automatic weapons killing three pilgrims and injuring seven others. Later, sporadic bomb explosions took place at different places. But most of the casualties occurred in the explosions at the Jama Masjid railway station, Lakhanpur railway station and near police headquarters.

But the militant activities could not establish a foothold in Jammu as authorities arrested several militants, including Kaka Hussain — area commander for Jammu. Arms and ammunition was seized from some localities and militants hideouts unearthed with the joint action of police and state intelligence personnel.

Though militants are able to carry out their subversive activities in Jammu City at their will since their movement between Kashmir Valley to other parts of the country is easier through national highway, they have not been able to develop cadres or obtain shelters in Jammu, the DIG, Jammu, Mr Rajan Bakshi said.

The latest case of explosion in a shop near a bus stand in the city was on August 22. One person was killed and seven others were injured in the incident. It was followed by a grenade attack on a BSF vehicle near residency road on the evening of August 26 injuring 13 jawans.

Mr Bakshi said besides occasional blasts in the city, there are conventional crimes and border smuggling too. Reports of nexus developing between Punjab and Kashmir militants were also pouring in, he said.

Simultaneously, border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, sharing a long border of over 200 kms with PoK and ranging from 4000 ft to 12,000 ft high, remained high on the agenda of those who master-minded or controlled terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. But these districts were used only in a supportive role with main concentration on Kashmir Valley, according to officials dealing with law and order in the two districts.

The terrain itself makes the guarding of border very difficult and Rajouri and Poonch and trans-border movement easier.

The passes of the range and higher reaches of border being snow-covered during winter makes movement over Pir Panjal extremely difficult and risky from December to March. However during rest of the year of the shortest and easier routes from number of PoK training camps in PoK pass through Rajouri and Poonch, including the famous Moghul route.

The special DIG of Rajouri and Poonch said motivators were identified and activated, sympathisers created and persons taken to PoK for

armed training in 1989-90. The process of return of these youth along with arms and ammunition started from January 1990 and beginning of militant activities synchronised with its shifting into high gear in the Kashmir Valley.

According to the IG police BSF. Dr Surinder Singh, 826 people from two border districts migrated to PoK since January 1990 to July 1992. These included 54 persons in 1990, 618 in 1991 and 154 till July in 1992.

The practice of this cross border movement by Kashmir militants however, received a set-back when in the middle of July 1990 as many as 33 militants were killed and 10 others arrested in an encounter.

The encounter effectively jolted the militants and no major border crossing was attempted from Rajouri and Poonch areas since then.

Also the simultaneous coordination between various agencies engaged in anti-terrorist operations and constant vigil on the borders made the militants lie low in these areas.

The IGP, BSF said more than 50 Punjab and Kashmiri militants and other intruders were killed.

## Appendix - 21

### JKLF PLANS GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST PAKISTAN, IRAN AND TURKEY

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PRO-INDEPENDENCE Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) is planning an aggressive international propaganda campaign against Pakistan as well as the pro-Pak militant groups in the Valley.

What has been holding the JKLF back so far, however, is the dilemma that confronts them every time they attempt such an exercise: Since Pakistan has been the main mover behind raising Kashmir in international fora, an attack on Pakistan serves to reduce the world community's attention on the Valley, thus, undermining the *raison d'etre* of the JKLF itself.

However, the JKLF leadership, according to reports reaching Delhi, on September 13, 1992 realises that it cannot allow Pakistan and pro-Pak militants, especially Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), to continue to marginalise the JKLF in the Valley as has been happening in the several months.

Pakistan has been supplying arms to various groups and besides directing them to create mayhem and harass security forces, has also been instructing them to overwhelm the JKLF with fire-power.

The HM has emerged as a serious contender to the JKLF for the mantle of the most popular militant organisation in the Valley. The JKLF, which had always enjoyed the support of the masses, is getting upstaged by the HM, which is attracting more and more youngsters in the Valley.

At the same time, Pakistan has been cutting off its support to the JKLF. The JKLF fears that if this continues, it will simply die out, as there is no one else to financially or otherwise support their cause.

The JKLF is, thus, thinking of using their international organisation (something the others, with their total dependence on Pakistan, do not have) to retaliate against the attacks upon it.

The JKLF is known to have a significant presence in the United Kingdom—they killed the then deputy High Commissioner Mhatre in Birmingham in the early 1980s for which Maqbool Butt was eventually hanged in India.

The JKLF is also firmly entrenched in the United States, particularly in New York, where the headquarters of the United Nations is situated. In Washington, however, the JKLF is said to be not sharply distinct from the umbrella of other Kashmiri organisations.

However, besides the Western countries, the JKLF would also like to lobby against Pakistan and the HM in some key nations in the Islamic world. Saudi Arabia is believed to be providing substantial material support to the militants. (The official line is that the supplies have been diverted from those which were intended for the Afghan Mujahideen in the war against the erstwhile Najibullah regime).

The two other nations are Turkey and Iran. Turkey is one nation that never supports India's stand on Kashmir, even in one- to-one parleys, while Iran always plays an important role in *politics* in the Islamic world.

However, since an attack on Pakistan may backfire and actually hurt the JKLF itself, the organisation has decided to wait till the onset of winter before deciding on a strategy.

It is believed that the JKLF would like to study trends.

How successful India is in its campaign against Pakistan's support to insurgency, and whether the security forces continue to gain the upper hand over the militants (in evidence since the beginning of August) are among the factors the JKLF will mull over before deciding their future action.

## Appendix - 22

### WE SAVED THE COUNTRY FROM DISINTEGRATION: VP

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Former Prime Minister and Janata Dal leader V P Singh has told a Pakistani Urdu daily that he resigned as Prime Minister on the Babri Masjid and Ram Janambhommi issue and saved the country from disintegration, reports UNI.

Mr Singh, who recently visited Pakistan to attend a conference of opposition leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, told *Nawa-i- Waqt* in an interview that Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi issue could have disintegrated India, but "I saved India from disintegration" (by stepping down).

Mr Singh answered many questions relating to Indo-Pak relations. About India's defence budget, he said this budget was made in Pakistan while the Pakistani defence budget was made in India. He meant that each was propelled to prepare its defence budget in the light of what the other was spending on defence.

Mr Singh said the two countries must make drastic cuts in their defence expenditure and instead spend this amount on removing illiteracy and unemployment.

However, Mr Singh said the time of confrontation between India and Pakistan had gone. The peoples of the two countries desired friendly relations.

He said he was not aware of any understanding between former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Ziaul Haq on resolving the Kashmir question. It was only the press which wrote about a "formula" but when he (Mr Singh) asked her about it she denied there was any.



He also denied he had prepared a formula to resolve the Kashmir crisis when he was the Prime Minister.

He said the confidence-building measures agreed upon between India (when he was the Prime Minister) and Pakistan (when Ms Benazir Bhutto was the Premier) had now produced a ray of hope. The two countries must trust each other and guard against intrigues.

## Appendix - 23

### ALL POSSIBLE AID FOR JK: FOTEDAR

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The Centre will provide every possible help to Jammu and Kashmir to restore essential services like road communication, power and water supply in flood ravaged areas of the State, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare M L Fotedar said in Jammu on September 14, 1992.

Mr Fotedar, who surveyed flood-hit areas in border district of Kupwara today, called upon the state and central officers to initiate relief and rescue measures without loss of any time so that affected people could have a sigh of relief.

Accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir Congress president G R Kar, Mr Fotedar convened a meeting of officers at Kupwara. He also met many locals in the district.

Mr Fotedar, who flew into Srinagar from New Delhi on the instructions of Prime Minister P V Narsimha Rao, said the Central Government was well aware of miseries and hardships being faced by people as a result of floods in the state.

He praised troops for rescuing people in flood-hit areas of the valley and providing relief to the needy.

Mr Fotedar will visit other districts of valley.

## Appendix - 24

### **MUOI FLAYS PAK SUBVERSION**

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Vietnam endorsed India's view that Pakistan's continued support to terrorism and subversion in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir amounted to blatant interference in this country's internal affairs and that Indo-Pakistani differences should be settled through peaceful bilateral negotiations under the Simla agreement.

A joint statement issued at the end of the six-day state visit in New Delhi, on September 14, 1992, by Vietnam Communist Party general secretary Do Muoi said 'Vietnam highly valued India's foreign policy of peace and non-alignment and its efforts aimed at improving and fortifying its ties with neighbouring countries to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation in South Asia.

During his stay in the Capital, Mr Muoi had two rounds of official discussions with Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and had called on President Shankar Dayal Sharma.

The communique said both India and Vietnam underlined the need to expedite operationalising the action plan tabled by India at the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament in 1988 in view of the changed international situation. The plan aimed at building a nuclear weapon-free world by the year 2010.

It said both sides emphasised that only multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations linked to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework could remove the threat that these weapons posed to the survival of humanity.

On Cambodia, the two countries shared the concern of the international community over the actions of the Khmer Rouge that hampered the implementation of the Paris agreement.

The communique said Mr Rao and Mr Muoi reaffirmed their determination to further strengthen and foster traditional friendship and all-sided cooperation between their countries.

They agreed to intensify their cooperation in keeping with the policy of 'Doi Moi' (economic renovation) and economic reform in accordance with the capability of each country to bring it to a new comprehensive and more effective stage commensurate with the excellent Indo-Vietnamese relations.

The communique said the two sides were of the view that Mr Muoi's visit would constitute a new landmark in Indo-Vietnam relations opening up broad prospects for cementing the bonds of friendship and multifaceted cooperation.

It said the two sides reaffirmed their support for the declaration of the Indian ocean as a zone of peace and reports by the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) and the international community to this end.

The two sides welcomed the recent positive developments in the relations among the South East Asian countries. India hoped Vietnam's association with the ASEAN would help in enhancing mutual trust among the countries of the region and offer bright prospects to build Southern Asia into a region of peace, stability and cooperation.

The communique said the President and the Prime Minister had accepted invitations from Mr Muoi to visit Vietnam.

## Appendix - 25

Pakistan Premier Nawaz Sharif has expressed his country's commitment to seek a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir problem.

Speaking at a banquet hosted by him in honour of visiting Mauritian Premier Anerood Jugnauth in Islamabad, on September 14, 1992, Mr Sharif said "both Pakistan and India have no option but to resolve the Kashmir issue amicably in the interest of peace and security in South Asia".

Referring to Mauritius' proposal of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean, Mr Sharif said Pakistan shares with Mauritius the idea of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

## Appendix - 26

### 'J & K ASSEMBLY' SET UP IN US

A group of Indian immigrants from Jammu and Kashmir, have announced formation of "Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in the United States" to counter Pakistani propaganda against the Indian state.

Announcing this on September 16, 1992 the Panthers Party chief, Mr Bhim Singh, told Indian journalists at the UN headquarters that such assemblies would also be set up in other western capitals where Pakistan is trying to "poison public mind against India."

"Pakistan is not only waging a terrorist war by proxy Kashmir, but also a vicious propaganda war by proxy in western capitals," charged the former Kashmiri legislator who is visiting the US.

In New York, the group will be led by one Mr A. Pandit.

Mr Singh challenged Islamabad to vacate occupied parts of Kashmir before seeking a plebiscite.

In recent years, Pakistan-backed Kashmiri groups have lobbied UN, an other for accusing India of violating Kashmiris' human rights.

Last week, some lobbying at a non-governmental organisation conference at the UN handed out anti-India literature.

One even sought to involve a group called "doctors without borders" in Kashmir. The group has operated in Afghanistan and elsewhere dispensing medical aid.

Mr Singh, who attended the meet as the head of Non-Aligned Congress of Youth (India), an NGO, counter attacked saying they were backed by Pakistan to spread lies.

"There are no children being killed," or other atrocities committed by the authorities in the state, he told fellow-participants.

"Those who talk of human rights should give up AK-47s and then demand world support," he said and suggested that Pakistan be reprimanded by the NGO forum for sponsoring terrorism.

Mr Singh circulated a statement detailing examples of Pakistani-sponsored terrorist acts and assailed its record in parts of Kashmir it has occupied for almost 45 years.

## Appendix - 27

### PAKISTAN FOR ARABS' SUPPORT ON JK

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Every week a Pakistan Air Force civilian jet takes off from Karachi and heads for one of the Gulf capitals. On board are middle-level officials, intelligence experts, politicians and a sprinkling of Azad Kashmiris. They are going with a mission to lobby with the mid level bureaucracy of the Gulf states. Further mould the Arab world's official and public opinion against India's treatment of Kashmir and Kashmiris.

Islamabad has intensified its lobbying efforts, evidently with an eye on the upcoming meeting in December of the Organisation of Islamic Conference Nations (OIC). A well orchestrated, sophisticated and integrated effort is on to generate political pressure on India to change its policies in Kashmir. A public relations dimension is being given to the low cost proxy war that India's adversary is pursuing.

However, this time the goal is more than the OIC. The idea is to use the Arab world's economic clout, notably that of Saudi Arabia, to prevail upon a recession hit, bumpy US Administration to echo the same sentiments to New Delhi.

Pakistan sees the Arab world not only as a means to an end but also as an interlocutor to influencing the United States. In this process the Arab world is being made to realize its economic clout, especially in the wake of a Saudi decision to place a \$ 9 billion arms order on the US.

The media of the Arab world is lending a sympathetic ear to the purported happenings in Kashmir. Anti-India TV sports have appeared over Arab satellite and over several of the region's broadcasters, including Qatar TV, Lebanese TV, Saudi TV and the Gulf TV system.

On Arab satellite the effort by Islamabad has drawn a sharp reaction.

Night after night the region is seeing pictures of turmoil in the valley. Steadily an impression is being created in the Middle East that India is indulging in a massive human rights repression campaign in Kashmir.

The common thread that passes through all the broadcasts is one of India rabid violation of human rights of the people of Kashmir, secondly, the Indian security forces are an occupation force in Kashmir and are hated and dreaded by the local population, thirdly India would much rather make Kashmir a ghost state than give in to concessions' and fourthly, India is scared of human rights organisations because it has a lot of to hide.

Interestingly, the editorial thrust of the TV war in the Middle East mirrors the very line being vigorously pushed by Pakistan in the United States.

The emphasis is on human rights and on the so-called atrocities being committed by the Indian security forces. Curiously, the angle of human rights group is a relatively new phenomenon as far as the middle east TV war goes.

Simultaneously, Islamabad is again seeking the OIC support. A position paper by Pakistan to the OIC besides human rights, also demands that India respect the right of self-determination.

The position paper also distorts history to project India as an aggressor which had occupied Kashmir in 1947, ignoring the fact that it were the Pakistani invaders who had entered the valley after it had duly acceded to the union of India. The report makes a passing reference to the Simla Accord but gives precedence to the UN resolutions of over four decades ago, predictably without mentioning Pakistan's failure to withdraw all its troops from the occupied territories of Kashmir.

Senior Arab sources tell ANI that in all probability Pakistan's position paper on Kashmir will again be endorsed by the OIC. But unlike the past Islamabad is using the OIC forum as but one element of its multifaceted campaign to win the propaganda war against India on Kashmir.

## Appendix - 28

### PILOT WARNS PAKISTAN

Union Minister for Communications Rajesh Pilot on September 18, 1992 warned Pakistan not to resort to any misadventure in Kashmir saying that it would prove costly to them.

Addressing a Congress rally in Midnapore, Mr Pilot said that India believed in the policy of peaceful co-existence but if Pakistan tried to make any misadventure a fitting reply would be given to them by the Indian Army.

## Appendix - 29

### THE KASHMIR QUESTION

The rationale behind the great power politics over Kashmir has ended in the post cold war era, says the Vice President, Mr K.R. Narayanan on September 20, 1992, in New Delhi.

In a foreword to collection of V.K. Krishna Menon's speeches on Kashmir at the United Nations, Mr Narayanan says, "India and Pakistan and the world as a whole, have changed a great deal since Krishna Menon made his historic speeches on Kashmir in the Security Council."

"The cold war has ended and with it, in a logical sense, the rationale behind the great power politics over Kashmir. Of course, the issue has acquired new dimensions and complications."

"And yet the crucial question remains viz, whether in the new configuration of power in the world the Kashmir question will be dragged into the power politics of the new order in West Asia or possible fundamentalist or geostrategic moves in the west central and east Asian regions, he says.

Mr Narayanan says "in the overhead atmosphere of the cold war, Menon's speeches in the Security Council in 1957 fell virtually on deaf ears. Though often repetitive they were marked by the intellectual brilliance, legal acumen, political vigour and debating skill — a tour de force in the true sense."

"He (Krishna Menon) presented the Indian case of Kashmir almost for all the time bringing out trenchantly and with flashes of wit and humour basic issues underlying the question conveniently ignored by the council such as Pakistan's aggression, the need for vacation of aggression and the impracticability of the plebiscite approach to the question, the foreward says.

The book titled "Krishna Menon on Kashmir—speeches at the United Nations" edited jointly by Mr A.K. Damodaran, former diplomat and Mr E.S. Reddy, former assistant secretary general of the United Nations is the second volume in the projected series.

In the case of Kashmir, India made a complaint of aggression to the Security Council but when it was by passed by the council and the matter was turned into a dispute. Nehru was surprised, writes Mr Damodaran in an editorial note.

"The matter has not been taken in the world organisation since 1965. In a sense therefore, these speeches remain the definite statements of India's position on the problem," Mr Damodaran says.

Summing up the arguments of Krishna Menon's speech on Kashmir Mr Damodaran says "in 1962 as in 1957 Krishna Menon makes it absolutely clear that India would not accept any further commitments than those contained in the August 1948 resolution.

In simple terms, this would mean first the evacuation of the territories occupied by Pakistan and thus the elimination of aggression.

"It would mean the total acknowledgement of India's sovereignty as a result of a perfectly legal and constitutional act of accession. Only when the prior conditions were established could we even begin to discuss the question of a plebiscite.

"When that stage is reached it would be necessary to decide whether the general principle of international law, that a serious change in circumstances can alter the obligations under the treaty would be applicable, the note says.

On secular policy the note says the strength of the Indian case was sought to be buttressed by Krishna Menon's exposition of the country's secular policy and the need for eschewing religious propaganda in elections.

The narrower problem thus became a more general projection of India's policy from 1947 onwards after the division of the country.

"The refusal to accept the two-nation theory and the adherence to an actively tolerant policy towards minorities in all parts of India was projected as being relevant," it says.

Referring to the reaction of western world the note says the western powers had become rather hostile to India after India's performance on colonialism etc., at the 1946 session of the General Assembly and later. Pakistan's case seemed convincing to people who did not know India: India was occupying a Muslim majority area.

"The tendency of our diplomats and diplomacy then was to be reasonable to the west not only on Kashmir but on some other issues to gain their goodwill. By 1950 Nehru was less conciliatory on this issue. Then some people thought he was going back on commitments.

"So what Krishna Menon did was not entirely new. He emphasised that conditions had changed and that all tentative commitments of the past were no more valid," the note says.

Krishna Menon's last great speech in the World Body not only on Kashmir but on any question was made in 1962 on the draft resolution put forward by Ireland. India's answer was firm and negative refusing to accept the equal treatment accorded to the "aggressor" and the "aggrieved" in the great confrontation, it says.

In his concluding speech Krishna Menon says "it is not our desire to create more trouble in the world than there is. But at the same time the council should not mistake our desire to continue the state of quietude and patience in this matter as an attitude of weakness or subservience or a willingness to surrender our sovereignty under pressure.

"Our sovereignty we shall never negotiate. Our sovereignty we shall never surrender. But we will make a very peaceful effort to prevent the situation from developing into one that would threaten the peace of the world and wherein it would threaten the peace of India as well".

"The Union of India, its integrity and progress is a matter of vital concern to us. We are often told by our friends who are concerned for our well-being of their great concern for us, do they really mean that? If they do they will bear this in mind," he added.

## Appendix - 30

### PAK AGGRESSION IN J-K

India clashed with Pakistan at the United Nations on September 23, 1992 when Islamabad raised the Kashmir issue, accusing New Delhi of pursuing a policy of suppression in what it insisted was a disputed territory.

"The only dispute that remains in Kashmir is the vacation of Pakistani aggression", India's delegate declared in the General Assembly exercising his right of reply.

The clash occurred when Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Siddique Khan Kanju advocated self-determination for Kashmir while addressing the 47th annual General Assembly debate.

While seeking early bilateral dialogue with New Delhi on Kashmir, Mr Kanju asked the world community to persuade India to desist from its policy of suppression in the Indian State.

"Pakistan must clearly understand", stressed Mr Sudhir Vyas "That Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and it shall remain so for ever regardless of Pakistani arguments and manoeuvres".

Mr Vyas, political counsellor in India's UN mission, told delegates that human rights violations in the State resulted from terrorism sponsored by Islamabad.

The Indian official noted that on one hand Pakistan spoke of its desire to commence bilateral dialogue in accordance with the Simla Agreement.

But at the same time, he said, it violates that mutually agreed upon framework for conducting good neighbourly relations, resolving bilateral issues and preventing of acts detrimental to harmonious ties.

"We still hope that Pakistan will realise the gravity of its actions and would return to the Simla Agreement in letter and spirit", the Indian delegate said.



Self-determination: Mr Kanju mentioned the Security Council resolutions of 1948-49, which called for plebiscite, declaring that "peace and tranquility will not return to South Asia unless this outstanding dispute is resolved."

But the Pakistani delegate failed to acknowledge the key condition set by the council — that Islamabad withdraw troops from part of Kashmir it has now occupied for 45 years.

Mr Kanju renewed Pakistan's proposal to station "impartial observers" along the Line of Control in Kashmir, claiming that "the uprising" in Jammu and Kashmir is "entirely indigenous and spontaneous".

He asked Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to "use his high office to persuade India desist from the path of violence and suppression against the Kashmiri people and to allow them the exercise of their right to self-determination as envisaged in the council resolutions.

"Attempts by India to portray the 45-year-old just struggle of the Kashmiri people in terms of external interference are aimed at distorting the historical facts and should, therefore, be outrightly rejected".

Mr Kanju brought up Kashmir in the context of application of principle of self-determination, which he listed next only to the objective of security of "both large and small States, both weak and powerful nations".

He set these objectives as part of a five-point action plan for world peace and progress.

Nuke-free zone: The Pakistani delegate also criticised India over nuclear arms race.

He told delegates of Islamabad's proposals to New Delhi for a regional or bilateral agreement to ensure nuclear non-proliferation, banning mass destruction weapons, and "mutual and balanced reduction" of the conventional force of the two countries.

"Regrettably", he said, "India remains non-responsive to the proposals aimed at ensuring nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia and bringing about mutual and balanced reduction of conventional forces.

"It continues to vote against the proposal for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia which has been repeatedly endorsed by this assembly.

"India has yet to accept the proposal for talks involving the United States, Russian Federation and China, as well as India and Pakistan, to ensure nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia. All the other proposed participants have responded positively to it".

EC's concern: The European Community has expressed concern over, what it called, "continuing reports of wider human rights violations" in both India and Pakistan.

In a memorandum circulated at the United Nations General Assembly, the community urged all concerned to allow 'responsible' international organisations access to Kashmir and to create conditions leading to progress over a genuine political process in Kashmir.

"They (the member nations) remain concerned about continuing reports of human rights abuses by Indian security forces and of material support being given to extremists in Kashmir from territory controlled by Pakistan", it said.

## Appendix - 31

### AFGHAN FIGHTERS CROSS INTO KASHMIR

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Some Afghan Mujahideen have crossed into Kashmir Valley and are fighting along with Kashmiri militants, according to the latest issue of the video magazine *Eyewitness*, dated September 23, 1992.

The magazine claims to have filmed a Sudanese engineer- turned-Afghan-Mujhaeddin about 40 kms from Srinagar and quotes him as saying that over 6,000 Afghan Mujahideen were massed along the line of control and were waiting to cross the border.

The Sudanese, Majid, said he had crossed over to Kashmir Valley from Muzaffarabad, capital of the so-called Azad Kashmir adding that most of the Afghans massed along the line of control owed allegiance to Hezbe Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Comparing the Afghan war with militancy in Kashmir, Majid says: "There is difference between, the Jihad here and in Afghanistan. The militants here are younger and more clever because there are many armies here and difficult for just a few Mujahids to control". The Sudanese Mujahideen says that the Indian security forces were difficult to fight as they improvised a new plan everyday unlike in Afghanistan where Government forces fought to a plan.

The video magazine says that Majid is fighting with the ranks of the dominant Kashmiri militant group, the Hezbul- Mujahideen. He is quoted as saying. "We prepare mines and train our borthers for crushing the Indian army."

Majid says he has been fighting alone militants for the past two months and came here along with his brother Rehman who he says is in another part of the Valley.

## Appendix - 32

### PAK STAND ON KASHMIR BJP EXPRESSES CONCERN

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The BJP on September 24, 1992 expressed concern over Pakistan's recent clash with India at the United Nations on Kashi and urged the Centre to chalk out a comprehensive action plan to combat "Pakistan mechanisations" on all fronts.

In a statement here, the BJP Vice-President, Mr Krishanlal Sharma, said Pakistan's recent clash with India at the United Nations on Tuesday night once again provides a positive proof of the fact that Pakistan is always crossing its limits by violating the Simla Agreement.

"It is a self-contradictory stand that on one hand Pakistan is asking for an early bilateral dialogue with India on Kashmir," said Mr Sharma adding "on the other hand it is using every possible third forum to raise the issue of disputed Kashmir territory with India."

It is high time that India should chalk out a comprehensive action plan to combat Pak mechanisations on all fronts, said Mr Sharma. India should have a strict vigil at the Line of actual Control' to stop infiltration of men and arms, he said, India should set up powerful TV centres in border areas to counter the false propaganda of Pakistan, he said.

Mr Sharma urged the Centre to send delegations to various countries to plead India's on Kashmir and the Union Home Ministry should evolve a coordinated action plan to curb the menace of terrorism from the country's soil.

Mr Sharma said India's representative in the UNO Mr Sudhir Vyas, in prompt reply to the false allegation levelled by the Pakistan representative, Mohammad Siddiqui Khan, rightly asserted that Jammu and Kashmir is an

integral part of India and the only issue remains is the vacation of Pakistan's aggression in Kashmir.

"India's as a country as well as a nation, irrespective of different political parties, is firmly united on this stand," said Mr Sharma adding "Pakistan, the UN and the so-called Muslim world must understand that India will rise as one man to fight out any foreign aggression or interference in its internal matters."

It is amusing that Pakistan should speak of violation of human rights in India, said Mr Sharma. "I would like to advise Pakistan to set its house in order and stop violation of human rights in Sindh and other areas of Pakistan instead of poking its nose in the internal affairs of India", he said. Pakistan must understand that it has proved to be an aggressor as well as a terrorist state by committing aggression in Kashmir and by indulging in several activities of training and arming the terrorists and secessionists in Kashmir and Punjab, he said. "India must demolish the chor machai shor (a thief raising cries) plot of Pakistan," he said.

Mr G. Kishan Reddy, Secretary of the BJP, submitted a memorandum to the President of India, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma.

Urging him to impress upon the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to take all steps to "eliminate" foreign pro-Pakistani elements from the country in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular.

## Appendix - 33

### CENTRE KEEN ON POLL IN KASHMIR, SAYS JACOB

Minister of State for Home M. M. Jacob on September 24, 1992, said in Uri the Centre was keen to resume the political process in the insurgency hit Jammu and Kashmir but declined to give any special time frame for the purpose.

"No deadline or time frame can be given because that will be an indication to the other side to scuttle the political process. Sometimes it is wise not to give any deadline" he said while talking to a group of reporters in this border town.

Mr Jacob arrived in Srinagar on September 24 on three-day visit to the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh to assess whether the time was ripe for holding elections to the State assembly.

He reviewed the law and order situation with Governor G C Saxena and top army, paramilitary and police officials after his arrival.

Talking to reporters after addressing a public meeting here Mr Jacob said Pakistan did not want an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are actively considering all the methods to bring normalcy in the State", he said, but hastily added "we will not resort to use of force unless compelled. We are trying to support popular leaders in the Valley in starting the electoral process".

Mr Jacob said the proxy war unleashed by Pakistan continued at its earlier intensity but the redeeming feature was that people were now increasingly turning against militancy. He noted that militancy in the State was on the wane.

State Governor G C Saxena who was also present said the number of recruits among militants had come down drastically while the number of people getting disenchanted with militancy had increased sharply.

Meanwhile a bandh was observed in the Kashmir Valley today on a call given by the outlawed "Hizbul Mujahideen" protest against the killing of some militants by security forces.

Mr Saxena said the intelligence network in the state had improved but added he was still not satisfied in this respect.

The Governor said about 12000 militants had received arms training in Pakistan so far. Of these nearly 50 per cent were inactive, he said. More than 1000 militants had surrendered so far and the number of active militants was 25,000 according to Mr Saxena.

Mr Jacob assured the people of Uri which has suffered a loss of Rs 12 crore and 12 deaths in the recent floods that the Centre would do its utmost in making available food supplies and relief and rehabilitation measures.

## Appendix - 34

### J-K OBSTRUCTS NORMAL TIES WITH INDIA: KHAN

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Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has reiterated his country's stand that the Kashmir question stood in the way of tension-free and cooperative relations with India.

Speaking at a dinner hosted by him in honour of the visiting Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in Islamabad, on September 24, 1992 at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Mr Khan accused India of coercing the Kashmiris into submission.

The Pakistani President said he wanted India to begin serious dialogue with Pakistan for resolving the Kashmir problem.

He said Pakistan wanted to establish "tension free and cooperative relations with India, but this hope had remained unfulfilled in the absence of a just and lasting peaceful resolution of the outstanding issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's new propaganda strategy is to tell foreign dignitaries the fact that the two countries are already engaged in negotiations to normalise bilateral relations.

Mr Khan said he was confident that a solution of the Kashmir problem would help secure permanent peace in south Asia and contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security.

Turning to Sri Lanka, Mr Khan said it had played a significant role in the evolution of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as an effective institutional mechanism for fostering cooperation among the south Asian neighbours in a regional framework.

He said Pakistan and Sri Lanka were bound by historical links dating back to Gandhara civilisation.

## Appendix - 35

### KASHMIR ULTRAS ON FRESH RECRUITMENT DRIVE

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MILITANT organisations in Kashmir have launched a fresh intensive recruitment drive, according to information available with the defence authorities in Srinagar, on September 26, 1992.

The development has caused concern among the security officials as most of the youths rescued by the army were the "victims of kidnappings and black-mail".

The militant outfits have embarked upon a fresh recruitment drive, besides stepping up their activities to stall moves by the Centre for initiating a political process in the state, the sources said.

Touching scenes were witnessed at the Badamibagh cantonment when the army authorities handed over a group of eight "would be militants" to their parents here on Thursday.

The eight youths in the age group of 17-22, were part of a group of 33 who were being forcibly taken to Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) for arms training.

While 25 of them crossed over to other side, eight boys — six from a Badgam village and two from city — remained behind and gave a slip to their "guides" and approached a nearby army camp for help.

The six village boys had come to Hazratbal shrine to offer prayers before celebrating selection to a professional college of their friend. It is at Hazratbal shrine where they were kidnapped by four militants and taken in a bus to an unknown destination at gun point.

Talking to reporters, one of the boys said the passenger bus was full and they had instructions not to talk to them. Most of the boys in the vehicle were willingly accompanying the "guides" but others were forcibly taken.

## Appendix - 36

### PORTUGAL BACKS INDIA ON KASHMIR

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Portugal has categorically stated that it is against the secession of Kashmir from India.

The Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mr Noao de Deus Pinheiro, made his country's position known during his meeting with the Minister for External Affairs, Mr Eduardo Faleiro, on September 25, 1992, at which multilateral and bilateral issues were discussed, officials present at the meeting said.

During the 30 minute meeting, Mr Faleiro explained that terrorism funded and supported by Pakistan was the major problem in Kashmir and the Indian Government was taking steps to contain it.

Mr Faleiro said the quantity of sophisticated weapons seized from terrorists in last few months was more than the total quantity seized from terrorists in Europe during the last two decades.

The Indian Minister refuted allegations of massive human rights violations saying that each such allegation was promptly investigated and the guilty punished.

On Punjab, Mr Faleiro said that Parliament, Assembly and municipal elections had been held and situation there had greatly improved.

The two ministers also agreed on the need for greater economic interaction and Mr Pinheiro said Portugal could become a gateway for Indian goods into the European Community.

## Appendix - 37

### OIC SINGS PAK TUNE ON KASHMIR PLATFORM

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The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) on September 28, 1992 has charged India with "alarming escalation" of "repressive measures" against people in Kashmir and decided to send a fact-finding mission to the State as also areas occupied by Pakistan.

It also decided to send a "good offices mission" to India and Pakistan with a view to easing tension between the two countries and promoting peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue.

A communique issued after the annual coordination meeting at Foreign Ministers level held in New York condemned the "massive" and "systematic" violation by India of human rights of people in Kashmir including their right to self determination.

The communique came after the foreign ministers heard a report by the OIC secretary general which was highly critical of India and accused New Delhi of "State-sponsored repression" of Muslim population in Kashmir. But the report did not refer to the fact that Pakistan is abetting. Arming, training and supporting militants and separatists in Kashmir.

Urging the Indian Government to "respect the human rights", the communique called for a speedy and peaceful settlement of the "Kashmir dispute" in accordance with the United Nations resolutions and in the spirit of the Shimla agreement.

The OIC released along with the communique a resolution adopted by the sixth summit held in Dakar in December last year which while commending "human rights violations", it welcomed the commencement of dialogue between India and Pakistan to resolve their outstanding differences through peaceful means.

The secretary general's report said that for almost two years "Indian controlled" Jammu and Kashmir has been a "locus" of civil strife and "State-sponsored" repression.

"The predominantly Muslim population of the Indian controlled Jammu and Kashmir is demanding liberation from Indian rule. The response of the Indian authorities so far has been brutal application of force to coerce the people into submission", it said.

The report said India had initially agreed to hold plebiscite. But, it later refused to honour its commitment. Since then it has disregarded the various United Nations resolutions calling for plebiscite and continues to occupy Kashmir by force against wishes of its people.

The core of the issue, it said, is the "denial of the exercise of the right of self determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the Security Council resolutions", it added.

The eight-page report of Kashmir said the Movement for Self Determination in Kashmir is "mass based and entirely indigenous".

Charging security forces with excesses, the report said "free from any fear of accountability", the security forces have been indulging in harassment, extortions, torture, arson, rape and indiscriminate killings.

To "conceal its repression", India continues to deny access to Amnesty International, the International Red Cross and other humanitarian groups.

## Appendix - 38

### PAK TOLD TO KEEP OFF PUNJAB AND J-K

The Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, said on September 28, 1992 that he hoped Pakistan would abandon its policy of instigating terrorism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and create a climate conducive to a meaningful dialogue.

Reiterating that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, the Prime Minister said in an interview to the French daily *Le Figaro* that there could be no compromise on India's unity and integrity.

On relations with Pakistan, Mr Rao said through dialogue we hope to reduce tensions and improve the climate of bilateral relations so that progress could be made towards normalising ties between the two countries.

"The results of our initiatives will depend upon Pakistan giving up its sponsorship of terrorism and subversion in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir", the Prime Minister said.

He said the Government was committed to holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir as soon as conditions are favourable.

"Free and fair elections are unfortunately not possible in the present climate of fear struck by the terrorists among the people", Mr Rao said.

In the wide ranging interview, Mr Rao answered questions on the economy, relations with neighbours, his mission to France and Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister discounted any fears of Hindu extremism in India saying the Hindu view absorbed "all trends, including off-beat trends".

"Religious extremism has always been confined to the fringes of our society. It is the spirit of tolerance that has enabled India to be home to so many diverse beliefs, faiths and sects through centuries", Mr Rao said.

The Prime Minister, who left on an official visit to France on Monday said he was holding wide-ranging talks with different groups on the Ayodhya issue and "we have been able to calm tempers".

Mr Rao said the Government wanted to arrive at a negotiated settlement among all concerned parties and if for some reason this was not possible, the decisions of the court will be binding on all.

Mr Rao said the next steps at reforms would be to give greater attention to the infrastructure and to improve the performance of key industries. Some massive investment proposals were nearing clearance.

The Prime Minister said the economic reforms were intended to make the Indian industry more modern, competitive and to accelerate the rate of growth. Inflation has been brought under control and the PDS has been revamped to help the poorer sections, he said.

Replying to a question he said there was no unrest in the industrial sector. There were certain apprehensions caused by a alarmist talk in some quarters about the sick industrial undertakings.

Government was examining this issue in consultation with the parties involved, including labour. The interests of labour were important and would be protected, he said.

Mr Rao said he was satisfied with the international reaction to the economic reforms and would welcome investment in infrastructure, energy and telecommunications and oil.

Referring to his official visit to Paris. Mr Rao said bilateral relations, and regional and international issues would be the main points on the agenda.

The Prime Minister said he would seek the views of the French on the European integration. Yugoslav crisis, situation in Central and East Europe and security issues among other things would come up.

He said interaction between India and France had always been of value and utility and was sure to be so on this visit also.

Mr Rao said the French could invest in infrastructure and the industrial fields in which French firms have competitive technologies and expertise.

The Prime Minister said India looked at a united Europe as a constructive player in an increasingly multipolar world. Europe could play an important role in the restructuring of international relations in the post cold war era.

India, he added, was prepared to join hands with individual European states as well as with the United Europe in confronting these challenges.

On relations with China, Mr Rao said, "we have made a promising beginning in improving our relations with China over the last few years. While we address difficult issues such as the boundary, we are developing relations in other fields."

Responding to a question on Afghanistan, the Prime Minister said India was hopeful that the country would once again show the resilience and fortitude to survive the present period of violence and tensions and settle down as an independent, non-aligned and united country.

## Appendix - 39

### BJP DEMANDS WHITE PAPER ON KASHMIR

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THE BHARATIYA Janata Party (BJP) has urged the Centre to bring out a White Paper on the Kashmir and enunciate a time-bound action plan, which should be finalised by an all-party meeting convened by the Prime Minister.

BJP President Murli Manohar Joshi and Member of Parliament Madan Lal Khurana in a press conference on September 28, 1992 called upon the Prime Minister or the Home Minister to visit the state in order to assess the situation. They maintained that conditions in the state are not conducive for holding elections to the Legislative Assembly or the Lok Sabha, something the Home Minister has been talking about.

According to them, if only two per cent of the people exercised their franchise during the last polls, this time even less votes would be cast in the event of elections in the prevailing situation, making India a "laughing stock".

Releasing copies of the report prepared by a three-member team which visited the Valley from September 19-22, 1992 the BJP leaders said: "In the first instance the back of the terrorists should be broken, and thereafter the Government of India should normalise the situation on its own terms."

Besides Mr Khurana, the team included BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit President Chaman Lal Gupta and General Secretary of the party's Gujarat unit Narendra Modi.

According to the team, in order to break terrorism's back, it is necessary to strike at its five pillars—arms and ammunition from foreign countries, inflow of foreign money, deflection of Government funds into the hands of terrorists, the local language press of Kashmir and the administration of the state.



These are part of the 18 suggestions made by the team, which intends to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister on the basis of its findings.

The team's 21-page report also calls for separate regional councils for Jammu and Ladakh, deployment of the Army to help the civil administration, purging the administration and the police of persons of doubtful antecedents, provision of relief in proportion to the devastation caused by the recent floods, construction of the Akhnoor bridge on a war footing, a clear policy to meet the war being conducted by Pakistan and intensification of publicity both at the state and international levels.

"A clear warning should be given to Pakistan that enough is enough, that the Government of India would no more tolerate all this any more, and, if necessary, action should also be taken for that. If we say in one sentence, now is the time to act, maybe even a month's delay in this regard may prove to be very costly for the nation," the team noted.

"The question of holding elections does not arise till the three lakh migrants return to their homes," Mr Khurana said, adding that their grant be increased to Rs 2,500 in view of rising prices. He demanded that special arrangements be made for the education and training of children of migrants and stringent measures be taken to protect their property in the Valley.

The delegation voiced its objection over the appointment of a Chief Secretary whose "antecedents are completely suspicious." Mr Ghulam Rasool was one of the five officers who had been dismissed on charges of supporting extremists and was a signatory to a letter written to the United Nations charging the security forces with committing atrocities on the extremists.

The report noted that the secret talks between the Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) were discontinued after a weekly wrote about it and that the JKLF and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen have agreed to unite towards first "liberating" Kashmir from India and then deciding whether to remain independent or merge with Pakistan.

The two organisations have launched an operation, "Black Thunder", to spread terrorism in the Valley through violence and looting, it said.

Dr Joshi maintained that the Government has kept the country in the dark about the developments since the National Integration Council meeting on Kashmir.

Taking off on the recent statements made by Iranian leaders, the BJP President said the world conference of Muslim countries to be held in Colombo is likely to take up the Kashmir issue.

Reiterating that Amnesty International should not be allowed to enter the Valley, the BJP leader said that the Government should strengthen the electronic media in the state. "Let alone Pakistan, we can't even inform the people in the Valley," he said.

## Appendix - 40

### INDIA REJECTS OIC OFFER ON KASHMIR

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INDIA HAS rejected the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) coordination meeting's communique on Kashmir as prejudiced, unacceptable and irrelevant.

There is no question of India accepting "any good offices or fact-finding or mediatory mission", the official spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry said on September 29, 1992, in New Delhi. The OIC had no locus standi in the matter and its views are one-sided, prejudiced and irrelevant, he added.

The OIC in its coordination meeting in New York had said that it would send a fact-finding mission to both India and Pakistan, in addition to a good offices mission. The OIC charged that there has been an alarming escalation in repressive measures against the people of Kashmir.

While the OIC communique was a matter of great regret, it was not one of surprise, the spokesman said, considering the past record of the organisation. The OIC had been handling the matter in a distorted fashion, which had been made clear to the participants of the conference on earlier occasions.

The disturbed situation in Kashmir is a product of external support to terrorism and militancy, the spokesperson said. This has been explained to the members of the OIC. "We have categorically asserted that the problem is not a religious one," he said.

## Appendix - 41

### S. ARABIA FOR J-K SOLUTION

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Saudi Arabia on September 30, 1992 called for a solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem on the basis of United Nations Resolutions.

Addressing the 47th annual General Assembly debate on Tuesday evening, Prince Saud Al-Faisal said, "we also need to point out that part of the world is still suffering from the continuation of the Jammu-Kashmir problem which remains an element of instability in the region."

## Appendix - 42

### NONE OF OIC'S BUSINESS

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OBVIOUSLY under pressure from Pakistan, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has periodically come out with anti-India pronouncements on Kashmir. At its annual Foreign Minister's level coordination meeting in New York a few days ago, the OIC went a few steps ahead to oblige Pakistan. A communique issued after the meeting charged India with violating the human rights of the people in Kashmir including "the right to self-determination." The conference decided to send a fact-finding mission to the state including the Pakistan-occupied areas as well as a "good offices mission" to India and Pakistan to promote a settlement of the Kashmir issue. The language of the communique and the report of the OIC Secretary-General, which talks of "state sponsored repression" of the Muslim population in Kashmir, show the extent to which the OIC has allowed itself to be used by one of its member countries. Kashmir is not a "Muslim problem", nor is it a problem of the OIC. The Indian External Affairs Ministry has done well to tell the OIC that it has absolutely no *locus standi* in the matter, and its "one-sided, unacceptable, prejudicial and irrelevant" remarks on the situation in the state are not amusing at all.

If the OIC sends a "fact-finding mission" to the sub-continent in pursuance of its decision, Pakistan no doubt will welcome it with open arms, viewing it as a triumph of its persistent efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue. Judging by the OIC stance, however, it is clear that such a mission will not have either the mandate or the inclination to gather the real facts. The striking fact about the whole situation is the Pakistani incitement of and assistance to terrorist and secessionist elements in Kashmir. If the OIC or its member states care to take note of it, the logical follow-up action should be a condemnation of Pakistan for indulging in actions which are contrary to any political or religious norms. New Delhi, of course, cannot

let the OIC poke its nose in Indian affairs, certainly not in the context of OIC's utterances and one-sided interpretation of the UN resolutions. As the MEA spokesman has made clear "there is no question of accepting any good office or fact-finding mission (from the OIC)". [ National Herald October 1, 1992 ]

## Appendix - 43

### INDIA, PAK CAN SORT OUT KASHMIR TANGLE: MANDELA

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The African National Congress president, Dr Nelson Mandela, on October 3, 1992 said in Islamabad that he was "confident" in the ability of Indian and Pakistani leaderships to sort out the Kashmir issue "without outside interference."

If the leaders of the both the countries failed to find a solution, the only outside agency which could help in resolving the Kashmir issue was the United Nations, Dr Mandela said at the institute of strategic studies in Islamabad.

Dr Mandela, who arrived in Pakistan on October 2 on a three-day official visit on his way to China, said that countries like India and Pakistan which had produced political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammad Ali Jinnah "will be able to rise to the occasion and through mutual exchange able to solve the issue of Kashmir."

The ANC leader was replying to a specific question as to what was ANC's stand on the issue of self-determination for Kashmiris after he finished delivering the lecture lasting 30 minutes. He said that he had confidence in the ability of the United Nations in promoting peace.

The visiting leader, who has been accorded the status of a Head of Government by Islamabad in recognition of his struggle against apartheid, said that the question of Kashmir was a matter of "great concern" as India and Pakistan were both "strongest allies" of the democratic movement in South Africa. "Any issue which can be a source of tension between India and Pakistan is one of great concern to us," he added.

Referring to situation in South Africa, 75-year-old Dr Mandela said that the Government of South Africa was committed to the negotiation process "but it is not committed to a majority rule."

He said that ANC had formulated a bill of rights but could not accept any special protection for any minority group, "the majority principle with all checks and balances must be accepted," he said adding that this was coming in the way of negotiations.

The ANC leader charged the South African government with paying huge sums of money to some African leaders to create violence and said that President, F.W. de Clerk should step down for failure to check the agencies from supplying money.

As far back as 1955, he said the ANC had declared that it stood for non-racial democracy and that "is the principle we are going to promote."

He said under ANC's bill of rights, Indians including Hindus and people from the Muslim states, settled in South Africa, would not be discriminated by a majority rule and would be free to exercise their right of religious freedom, maintain their culture and language and have access to education. "We are concerned about the rights of human beings and not any race," he said and added that ANC believed that there was no need to protect any particular group.

## Appendix - 44

### **'AZAD KASHMIR' DOES NOT EXIST, INDIA TELLS PAK**

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INDIA HAS strongly objected to Pakistan referring to areas of Kashmir under its control as 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' and told Islamabad that no such entity exists. Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and the areas of the State referred to by Pakistan are under its illegal occupation, Indian representative TP Srinivasan told the U.N. General Assembly on October 6, 1992.

Mr Srinivasan said India regretted that Pakistan made an 'unwarranted' reference to the 'so-called Azad Jammu and Kashmir' in the request it sent for the inclusion of its appeal for flood relief in the Assembly's agenda.

Meanwhile, BJP Vice-President K L Sharma said India must formulate a policy regarding Pakistan following its repeated violation of the Shimla Agreement. "We should review our policy in order to reply in strong terms against the unfriendly acts of Pakistan," he said.

## Appendix - 45

### **'POK PRESIDENT' TO VISIT CHINA**

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The 'president of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan said on October 4, 1992 that he will shortly visit China with whom, he said, they shared 'excellent relations'.

Talking to the Pakistan Press International (PPI) on the completion of his fortnight-long visit to France, Germany and Britain, he said China had a historical role to play both regionally and internationally in the context of Pakistan's stand on Kashmir.

## Appendix - 46

### ARAB NATIONS JOIN PAK PROXY WAR IN J-K

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The presence of foreign nationals among the terrorist ranks in Kashmir valley confirms the long held belief that Pakistan has diverted a large number of guerillas from several Islamic countries, previously engaged in operations in Afghanistan to the conduct of its proxy war in the Indian state.

For the most part the foreigners are from Afghanistan with a sprinkling of youngmen from some Arab and north African countries, these are men who were trained by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency in camps set up with Saudi help to train Islamic fundamentalist guerillas.

Most of the money for the camps came from a top Saudi business house. Some of these guerillas were later seen in action in Algiers although most continued to stay back in Pakistan making occasional forays into Afghanistan.

Lately the ISI has deployed them in Kashmir. The bulk of these young Muslim fundamentalists are highly motivated and better trained than their Kashmiri counterparts whose training so far has been of a limited nature.

The ISI may perhaps have miscalculated things while deploying the foreign guerillas in the Valley. The people in the Valley have traditionally been suspicious of all foreigners including, of course, Punjabis from Pakistan. And even more so the Afghans whose presence only irks the more sophisticated Kashmiri Muslims.

According to reports available in London (October 12, 1992) the Pakistanis are planning a step-up in the operations in Kashmir. The Saudis and the Iranians are believed to have promised all out support to the Kashmiri terrorists.

Indeed these reports suggest that the three are working in concert to increase the pressure on the security forces in the winter months. This would mean dumping equipment and trained personnel in the Valley before the high mountain passes become inaccessible during the winter months.

Saudis and Iranians may not see eye to eye on many other issues but with Pakistan acting as a catalyst the two are understood to have promised their full support to the so-called liberation movement.

If they have not already started implementing their strategy is because they are not as yet sure of the Indian response. As of this moment the three seem to be agreed on doing everything possible that falls short of a direct war with India.

## Appendix - 47

### 3,000 PAK ULTRAS'

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The winter may not prove to be a deterrent for the Pakistani trained militants to sneak across the Line of Control (LoC) from Pakistani occupied Kashmir (PoK), it is feared in Poonch, On October 31, 1992 more than 3,000 militants with arms and ammunition were waiting at the forward defence locations all along the LoC to sneak into Indian territory.

It is noted that during the past three winters, the insurgents did succeed in crossing the snowbound Pir Panjal ranges from Poonch and Rajouri into the Kashmir valley, thus exploding the myth that it was impossible to cross the high mountains in adverse weather conditions. The militants who are highly motivated, with the help of local guides were able to across the mountains through numerous passes into the Kashmir valley.

The militants are more determined and better equipped to meet the vagaries of weather, many of them have been trained in high altitude warfare and provided special clothing and shoes to negotiate the treacherous climatic conditions.

The apprehension is that Pakistan's military intelligence outfit, ISI, would try to push the maximum number of militants before the snowfall from the Rajouri Uri-Gulmarg and Tithwal sectors under the cover of unprovoked firing by the Pakistan troops on the border.

The ISI is said to have purchased snow shoes and jackets several lakh from different shoe and jacket dealers in different parts of Pakistan and supplied them to militants to facilitate border crossing during the winter season.

Meanwhile, additional troops, especially trained in dealing with the insurgents in the fog and snow affected areas have been deployed at various points identified as possible routes for infiltration in Poonch, Rajouri and Uri sectors. Constant vigil is being maintained to foil any attempt by the militants to cross the LoC.

## Appendix - 48

### TERRORISM IN KASHMIR

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The new leadership of Britain's Labour Party has unequivocally condemned terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir and denounced support to the terrorists "from whatever sources it comes from".

"We can't endorse undermining of democracy anywhere in the world and therefore, unreservedly denounced terrorism in all its manifestations", two prominent members of the Labour's New Shadow Cabinet said in London, on November 1992.

Speaking to newsmen after calling on Indian High Commissioner to UK Dr. L M Singhvi, ?Dr Jack Cunningham and Tony Blair said the Labour party fully supported the Simla Accord as the basis for peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan.

The two leaders said the Labour Party firmly believed in the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India. "We are not interested in fragmentation" and would like to see democratic progresses to be restored in Kashmir with full civil liberties.

They offered Labour Party's good offices in helping to resolve the problem in Punjab and Kashmir.

## Appendix - 49

### KASHMIR AND PAKISTAN

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The United Nations officials have apologised to India for the erroneous omission of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of India in a map on the cover of a recent UN publication.

P V Narasimha Rao has received an invitation to visit Pakistan from his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif, which is under consideration, India's Minister for External Affairs, Ednardo Faleiro told Anna Joshi in a written reply in the Lok Sabha, on November 25, 1992.

In reply to another question, Faleiro told Joshi that India would continue to take all steps to rebuff any move by Pakistan to raise the Kashmir issue at any international fora.

## Appendix - 50

### ARABS, AFGHANS AND KASHMIR

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Islamabad says, three militant groups (Two Afghan and one Arab) equipped with surface-to-air missiles have reportedly entered Indian Kashmir in response to a call given by the Kashmiri freedom fighters. The help of these militant groups was sought by the Kashmiris to shoot down Indian planes over Jammu and Srinagar.

According to Afghan sources the "blow-pipe" surface-to-air missiles were supplied to the Afghan war against foreign forces was at its peak.

they say these missiles have been found very effective in targeting planes. Reports say that the Indian Commercial Pilots Association has already refused to operate flights to Jammu and Srinagar for fear of being shot down by these missiles.

The Afghan groups possess a large number of these missiles and had refused to return them even after the collapse of Najibullah's Communist regime in Afghanistan.



## Appendix - 51

### KASHMIR AND ISLAMIC NATIONS

Home Minister S.B. Chavan told the Rajya Sabha on November 30, 1992 that the team of MPs which visited Kashmir recently feels that the atmosphere is not congenial for holding elections in the state.

Chavan said ex-MPs, ex-MLAs and others residing in the state at a meeting with him had also opined that the time was not yet ripe for elections.

He told Mr. G.G. Swell that the Government was aware of the views of some Islamic nations besides Pakistan on Kashmir, but "we will not tolerate any interference by anyone."

Referring to the MPs team led by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was present in the House. Chavan said no written report had been submitted but the team had met him as well as Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. The team had only covered Kashmir and would go to Jammu and Ladakh on their next visit.

The minister strongly criticised human rights organisations for spreading disinformation and urged members not to be misled by these reports which were only meant to defame the army.

Chavan said the team had emphasised that the innocents must not suffer because of police or militants' action. He said the Government had already given strict instructions in this regard. However "it could not be helped," if the innocents were killed in cross-fire. But action was taken against officers for other killings of the innocents. He said the issue of training camps set up in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir had been taken up at the diplomatic level.

He told M. Hanumantha Rao that there had been total alienation in the state but the situation was now changing.

Chavan told Jagmohan that the Government was aware that militants had earlier been making money through contracts, but "things are changing now."

The team also raised the issue of financial stringency facing the state and suggested immediate steps should be taken in this regard, as also to provide foodgrains and petroleum products.

## Appendix - 52

### FAROOQ HOLDS TALK WITH NARASIMHA

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Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah had extensive talks with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Home Minister S.B. Chavan on initiation of the political process in the troubled state.

Dr Abdullah, gave the Prime Minister his assessment of the situation in the state, National Conference sources said in New Delhi, on January 24, 1993.

The National Conference leader was summoned by the central leaders for discussion on the current political situation in Jammu and Kashmir and to involve leaders of all secular parties in restoration of normalcy there, the sources said.

The Prime Minister is also keen to evolve a political package for the state and in this context the talks with Dr Abdullah assumes significance.

Dr Abdullah had demanded earlier that the Centre spell out the quantum of autonomy it was prepared to give the state.

Dr Abdullah's meeting with the Prime Minister and the Home Minister was also important because of the Centre's reported move to start the process for holding elections in the state in summer.

## Appendix - 53

### ISLAMIC STATES FOR SECULAR INDIA

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Leaders and intellectuals in Islamic countries were keen to see secularism flourish in India despite the system of state religion in their own countries, according to former Indian Foreign Secretary M.K. Rasgotra.

Mr Rasgotra visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran at the invitation of some intellectuals and after discussions with them felt that while there was concern among them over the demolition of the Babri Masjid, nobody wanted India to be weakened by communal or ethnic divisions. There was also a general appreciation that the incident caused anguish among both the Hindus and Muslims.

He told UNI on January 24, 1993 after meeting people in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Teheran that anyone with a sense of history could see that the modern India belonged to all, and that he also impressed upon his hosts that if India was secular, it was because the large majority of the Indian population, the Hindus, were tolerant and respectful of other religion.

In a country of 870 million people, aberrations could not be ruled out but it should be noted that there are half a million mosques in India's 600,000 villages and 5,000 towns and cities.

Mr Rasgotra said that an Iranian minister told him that Iran stood for peace and stability in India, and that it was also imperative for peace and stability of the region.

He said that the issue in India was not just the Mandir-Masjid controversy. The problem was many-faceted although it had culminated in the tragic happenings at Ayodhya last month. For instance, he said, he told his hosts that Indians were unhappy because many Islamic countries took sides with Pakistan on the basis of religion irrespective of who was right and who was wrong.

## Appendix - 54

### PAK FOR BETTER TIES WITH INDIA

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President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif have sent "warm felicitations" to their Indian counterparts on the occasion of India's 43rd Republic Day.

Against the background of a concerted campaign by right-wing parties like the Jamat-i-islami for a boycott of the Indian High Commission's Republic Day reception in Islamabad, on January 26, 1993, the felicitously worded messages, released officially to the Press, augur well for the otherwise strained Indo-Pak relations.

"We in Pakistan sincerely desire to establish tension-free and cooperative relations with India. Such a relationship would best serve the interests of our two countries as well as strengthen peace and stability in the region," Ghulam Ishaq said in his message to President Shankar Dayal Sharma. "I also avail myself of this opportunity", he continued, "to express my sincere wishes for your excellency's personal good health and for the progress and prosperity of the people of India."

In his message to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, the Pakistani Premier expressed the confidence that "with mutual efforts we shall succeed in establishing good neighbourly and cooperative relations between Pakistan and India."

Meanwhile, Mr Sharif welcomed on January 25, 1993 day his British counterpart John Major's emphasis on negotiations between Islamabad and New Delhi to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

In a statement published in Islamabad Mr Sharif reiterated Pakistan's readiness to engage in "meaningful negotiations" with India under the 1972 Simla agreement which calls for peaceful resolution of bilateral disputes.

## Appendix - 55

### UK WILL NOT BE GO-BETWEEN ON KASHMIR : JOHN MAJOR

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BRITAIN IS against the idea of brokering a solution between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, British Prime Minister John Major said in New Delhi on January 25, 1993.

"Kashmir is an issue for India and Pakistan to resolve mutually", he said, adding, "it cannot be resolved by outside parties."

Mr Major said that at no stage had Britain suggested it be an intermediary between India and Pakistan. "It is not for us to broker a solution. We have never done so and are not going to do so in the future," he said.

Britain had three main proposals on the Kashmir issue, Mr Major said. "We want a dialogue between India and Pakistan on the subject; political process to be resumed in Kashmir; and an end to external support to terrorism in the State."

Expressing his delight at being in India, Mr Major said that he was here to further improve relations between India and Britain. "In fact, relations between the two countries had never been closer since Independence. It was the first time that a British Prime Minister was the chief guest at the Republic Day parade," he said. Britain had full faith in India's deep-rooted democracy, its commitment to the rule of law, secular Constitution, tolerance and protection of the minorities, he added.

Asked about the fate of the British Aerospace proposal to sell the Hawk trainer jet to the Indian Air Force, Mr Major evaded the question. He, however, confirmed that it had been one of the subjects discussed during the day.

Regarding the reported terrorist threats against him, Mr Major said he was happy with the arrangements made for his visit. "The threats had come

as a result of Britain's commitment to the Extradition Treaty signed by the two governments," he said.

India and Britain, among many others countries, had to deal with international terrorism and each government had to cooperate with the other to tackle the problem, Mr Major said.

Regarding discussions on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty issue, Mr Major said that Britain wanted the extension of the NPT, and wanted each of the 32 countries who were not signatories, to sign the NPT.

The Indian economic reforms, said Mr Major, were a clarion call to the future. India and Britain have had long-standing commercial ties. However, there was one change now. It was much easier to do business now and that many British businessmen were very keen to do so. "It is in the joint interest of both countries to expand the historic relations into a modern partnership," he added.

Several aspects of economic relations were discussed, Mr Major said in response to question whether the issue of Indian labour laws cropped up. "It was for the Indian Government to decide on the measured pace to be adopted," he said.

Asked about reports of temples demolished in Britain in the after-math of the Ayodhya demolition, Mr Major said that whenever people break the law, they would be subjected to the rigours of the law. It was a matter for the police and they were dealing with it, he added.

## Appendix - 56

### TIME TO HELP END BLOODSHED IN VALLEY

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OUR Constitution and democratic institutions have stood the test of time despite all the challenges that our nation has faced during the period of over 40 years in the fast changing world.

Our country has made considerable progress in the fields of economic development, science and technology, education and upliftment of weaker sections of our society. However, our fight against poverty, illiteracy and several social ills remains to be won.

Presently, we are facing threats to our security and secular system which we have to overcome with a strong determination as a united people. The delicate fabric of our nation woven around, democracy and secularism has come under strain during the last few weeks in the wake of the event that occurred at Ayodhya. The communal forces which have raised their ugly head in several parts of the country can only be contained through good sense and firm resolve on our part.

During the past three years the agencies of our neighbouring country have tried to destabilise the situation in our own state by sponsoring and aiding terrorism from across the border. They not only instigated, trained and armed thousands of our misguided youth to indulge in armed violence in the Kashmir Valley but of late, they have also been infiltrating some PoK nationals and a few foreign elements to prop up militancy in the Valley. They have also tried to extend the arc of violence to some parts of the Jammu division.

Our efforts will continue to create conditions which will be conducive to the return of misguided youth to the Valley with safety and honour.

The people in the Valley are now thoroughly fed up with militancy and want an end to terrorist violence and return of normalcy. They have fully

realised now that the militant movement has achieved nothing so far and is not going to achieve anything in future also.

The government and the security forces have been successful in thwarting the evil designs of our neighbouring country. The time is now ripe for the people to mobilise and assert themselves and help the administration in putting an end to the sad chapter of senseless bloodshed and destruction.

The Army and other security forces in the state have been working with great dedication and courage in very trying and difficult conditions in facing the difficult conditions in facing the militancy. I pay tribute to the memory of those brave personnel who made the supreme sacrifice of their lives or sustained various injuries during the discharge of their duties.

The strength of India lies in our ethos and traditional values which have survived all the vicissitudes over the centuries.

There should be no doubt that our country will not only come through all trials and challenges but would emerge stronger. I wish you all a happy Republic Day.

## Appendix - 57

### HAND OVER KASHMIR TO UN : AMANULLAH

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REITERATING his demand for the 'third option' in Kashmir, the president of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Mr Amanullah Khan, on January 26, 1993 said no one in the world could ignore the Kashmiris for a solution to the problem in that state.

The 'third option' is the demand by the JKLF for making Kashmir an independent entity, independent of both India and Pakistan. This demand is a thorn in the side of the Pakistan establishment, which has been calling for the implementation of the UN resolution calling for giving the right of self-determination to the Kashmiris. The right, as defined in the January 5, 1949 resolution of the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan, was very specific. It called for the plebiscite to decide whether the Kashmiris want to join India or Pakistan. There was no mention of complete independence. This is a demand made in recent years and is much disliked in Pakistan.

Mr Khan, who has also always demanded the implementation of the UN resolutions, today argued that the January 5, 1949 resolution was not completely acceptable since it mentioned only the options of joining either India or Pakistan. He said the earlier resolution by the same commission, passed on August 13, 1948, had not limited the options for the Kashmiris. It had called for an unlimited option of letting the Kashmiris decide their future. It may be mentioned that even the Pakistan prime minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, had once floated a trial balloon, when he mentioned the third option as a possible solution to the Kashmir dispute. As expected, it led to a massive furore in Pakistan and he backtracked.

Mr Khan argued that the Kashmir issue cannot be treated purely as a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan. The best solution, in the

immediate future could be handing over the entire Kashmir to the United Nations for about 10 years and then holding a plebiscite. He insisted then the third option should be one of the options to be offered to the Kashmiri people. "No fool on earth can deny us this. No one can stop us from becoming a part of the solution".

He said there was a campaign on in Pakistan against the idea of the third option. He mentioned that the former prime minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, had recently rejected this idea. Similarly leaders in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir had also been making similar statements. He observed, according to Ms Bhutto an independent Kashmir could not exist because of the existence of big and powerful neighbours around it. "This argument equally applies to Pakistan, which is surrounded by powerful neighbours. If Pakistan can exist, then why can't Kashmir exist", Mr Khan wondered.

Referring to the British prime minister, Mr John Major's statement in Delhi offering to mediate between India and Pakistan, Mr Khan said Mr Major had been "playing with words" and there was nothing new in the British stand.

However, in the next breath he referred to a statement by the British foreign secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd, saying that the will of the people of Kashmir should prevail. He said similar statement was made by the US president, Mr Bill Clinton. However, except for Mr Khan, no one seemed to be aware of these statements. It may be pointed out that on a visit to Islamabad, a couple of months ago, Mr Hurd had repeated Britain's three-pointing formula for solving the Kashmir problem. This formula includes a dialogue between India and Pakistan under the Simla accord, stoppage of arms and ammunition from going over the Pakistan side to Kashmir and India starting a political process in Kashmir.

## Appendix - 58

### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FLAY OIC MOVE ON KASHMIR

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Members in the Rajya Sabha on April 30, 1993 asked the Government to put its policy on Kashmir in the right perspective at international fora in the wake of passage of an anti-India resolution at the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) conference in Karachi.

Raising the matter through a special mention, former External Affairs Minister I K Gujral (JD) expressed disappointment that the resolution had been passed by Islamic countries despite the fact that India had always upheld their cause.

The Foreign Ministers of the Islamic countries did not understand the actual problem but had been misled to a "garden path by the Pakistani diplomacy," he added.

Gujral said Pakistani sponsored terrorism had, in fact, been causing sufferings to the people of not only Kashmir but the whole of the country.

According to Gujral, India should not be much concerned over the resolution and rather concentration explaining its policy on Kashmir to the Islamic countries.

Suresh Kalmadi (Congress) while associating with Gujral did not agree with the Janata Dal member's suggestion that India needed not take the resolution seriously. The Kashmir issue was an internal matter of India and the Government should not allow any country to interfere in it, he added.

Mohammed Afzal (JD) said Pakistan should better concentrate on its own problems instead of interfering in India's internal affairs. He said the light of Mohajirs in Pakistan had never attracted the attention of the Government of the neighbouring country.

J P Mathur (BJP) said the right to self-determination, as demanded by the OIC in its resolution, was not acceptable to India.

India should take up the matter at the diplomatic level with members of the OIC. He was disappointed to note that countries friendly to India had also supported the resolution.

Digvijay Singh (SJP) said the passage of such resolution at international meetings was nothing new and, therefore, India should not be over concerned. "But, we should make every effort to make the world aware of our policy on Kashmir," he said.

Raising the issue during zero hour in the Lok Sabha Janta Dal member Rabi Ray expressed grave concern in the Lok Sabha today over the India-baiting by the Foreign Ministers of the OIC countries.

He said the meeting was used to launch an anti-India trade and interfere in India's internal affairs.

He said shockingly the conference equated the Kashmir situation with those of Palestine and Bosnia.

Ray wondered if the Government had done any thing to prevent the OIC from taking the stance it took at Karachi.

He wanted the Government to take the House into confidence and make a statement.

## Appendix 59

### **'SETBACK TO PAK STAND ON KASHMIR'**

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Although Pakistan has been trying to internationalise the Kashmir "dispute" at the United Nations, the issue has not gained adequate "political impetus," Pakistani diplomat acknowledged on April 30, 1993.

First there has to be "political impetus," Jamshed Marker, Pakistan's UN envoy, told journalists at UN headquarters as he ended his month-long presidency of the 15-nation Security Council.

Marker who was commenting on how lack of resources at times held up council efforts to resolve political conflicts and disputes, was asked by a Pakistani correspondent if that had been the case in Kashmir.

Marker replied that was not so. In the case of Kashmir, he said, "unfortunately," the old resolutions had not been adopted under chapter VII and were not mandatory.

## Appendix - 60

### SOLVE KASHMIR TANGLE THROUGH TALKS : YEMAN

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Yeman on May 4, 1993 urged India and Pakistan to solve the vexed Kashmir problem within the framework of Simla agreement, the Yemenese permanent under secretary for political affairs, Ahmed Dhaifullah Alezaib said that his country was prepared to extend all help to both the countries in solving the problem. He suggested that both India and Pakistan should hold direct negotiations for an amicable and peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue.

Ahmad who had represented Yemen during the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Karachi recently admitted that the resolution adopted on Kashmir by the OIC was a setback to India but he said that India continues to be a valued friend of the *Arab world*.

## Appendix - 61

### ISI TRAINING 18,000 KASHMIRI MILITANTS

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More than 18,000 Kashmiri militants were being trained in special Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) camps set up in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and in pakistani territory, Minister of State for External Affairs R L Bhatia told the Rajya Sabha on May 5, 1993.

Along with Kashmir militants, scores of Afghan national were also being imparted guerilla warfare training.

He said the Government has intensified surveillance and patrolling along the border and Line of Control to prevent infiltration.

In reply to a question on British Premier John Major's suggestion to Pakistan to start a dialogue on Kashmir, the minister said India had consistently sought peaceful and bilateral settlement of all problems with Pakistan in accordance with the Shimla Agreement.

The Minister said John major had mooted a three-point formula on the Kashmir issue, which included initiation of a political process and respect for human rights in Kashmir and cessation of external support for the militants.



## Appendix 62

### PAK ACCUSED OF BUTCHERING MUSLIMS

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Status quoist peace campaigner for Kashmir Anwar Khan on May 19, 1993 appealed to those Kashmiris who wish to join Pakistan in the hope of an Islamic system to make a realistic study of the state of Islamisation in the country before taking such a decision.

In a pamphlet, "The Kashmir Dispute—are guerilla leaders and their supporters on the right track?" Khan, a Kashmiri, who has been heading the Jammu and Kashmir peace committee in the United Kingdom after he left Rawalpindi, writes, "Those already in Pakistan will be aware that succeeding governments have been unable to establish such a system (Islamic) since coming into power in 1947. What is seen in Pakistan is theocratic terror which is totally based on sectarian Mullahism..."

He writes that those Muslims who wish to detach themselves from the "Hindu Raos" of India and join the "Muslim Raos" of Pakistan, should think of what the latter did with fellow Muslims in East Pakistan in 1971 and compare it with what the former have done for their fellow Kashmiris during the past four years.

The difference between the "Hindu and Pakistani Raos" according to Khan, is that while the latter "butchered" Muslims to suppress democracy in East Pakistan, the former's action in Kashmir is aimed at restoring democracy.

Khan writes, the Indian part of Kashmir always had democracy while the other side under the Pakistani control remained under suppression but did not have the courage to seek help from their Kashmiri brothers on the Indian side.

"By considering all the circumstantial and documentary evidence regarding the Kashmir dispute, the conclusion would seem to be that compared to the position of India, guerilla leaders and their supporters appear to have lost their sense of direction."

He has appealed that guns should be put down in Kashmir immediately and the Kashmiri leaders should ask India and Pakistan to open their borders to enable the Kashmiris, who have been forcibly divided, to be reunited.

## Appendix 63

### US IS WILLING TO DEFUSE J&K ROW

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The three-day Indo-US official level talks were an honest review of bilateral issues, with human rights heading the three most important problem areas, which also include trade relations and nuclear non-proliferation.

Regarding Kashmir, the US official said that the US was prepared to help the process of dialogue between India and Pakistan. If both countries desired it.

During his discussions in New Delhi, John Malott, head of the South Asian Bureau in the State Department, pointed out that even within India there was concern regarding the deteriorating situation in Kashmir, and expressed the hope that the Government was taking care to address the problem.

Speaking at the India International Centre, on May 19, 1993 Malott said that the Clinton Administration attached great importance to human rights and democracy as a central element of American foreign policy.

On another occasion, Malott said that India had to bridge the gap between the human rights principles enshrined in the Constitution and what was being practised on the ground.

Malott's observations on this sensitive issue were couched in a manner consistent with what he called "the improvement in the atmospherics of Indo-US relations, where both sides can talk to each other honestly, without the suspicions of the past. The days of one-upmanship are over."

Kashmir was a major source of Indo-Pakistani tensions and the cycle of violence was achieving a momentum of its own. India should pursue a meaningful political dialogue with the Kashmiris, but the "dialogue should

not be held hostage to the actions of the militants, lest it give them the upper hand," Malott said.

As for Pakistan, he said that there had been credible reports that it was providing official support to the militants and the US had raised the matter continuously at the highest level.

The three basic principles which government US position on Kashmir was that all of Kashmir was disputed territory, on both sides of the Line of Control, it was an issue to be settled peacefully by the two countries, taking the views of all Kashmiris, both Muslims and non-Muslims. The US was prepared to assist in the process if both sides wanted it, he added. It is for the first time that there is such a clear reminder to both countries, particularly Pakistan, that the US believes the Kashmir issue encompassed the entire erstwhile princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The US intended to "push prod, cajole, encourage both countries to reduce tensions, build confidence and move beyond rhetoric and posturing to start a process of detente", the US official said at the end of his ten-day tour of the two countries.

Malott outlined six areas which could form part of an "agenda for progress" for India and the US including military cooperation, Indo-Pak relations and dialogue on NPT.

## Appendix 64

### **'PAKISTAN MANIPULATING OIC RESOLUTION'**

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India on May 20, 1993 accused Pakistan of manipulating the proceedings at the Karachi meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to push through the resolution on the Kashmir issue.

The Indian view on the resolution was discussed at a meeting between Minister of State for External Affairs. Salman Khursheed and visiting Maldives Foreign Minister, Fatullah Jameel.

The two leaders discussed at length Pakistan's attempts to manipulate the proceedings and push on the OIC agenda on the Kashmir issue.

Jameel, who is currently in New Delhi on an official visit also met Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao and discussed bilateral matters and regional issues.

Jameel and Khursheed expressed satisfaction over the excellent state of relations between the two countries.

## Appendix 65

### **BJP ON KASHMIR DEVELOPMENTS**

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The BJP on October 18, 1993 expressed concern after the developments in Hazratbal Mosque at Srinagar during the last two days and criticised the "Centre for its weak-kneed" policy towards Pakistan which was responsible for the incidents in the city.

Briefing newsmen in New Delhi BJP General Secretary, K.L. Sharma, said the "grave developments" in Hazratbal Mosque at Srinagar during the last two days have badly shaken the confidence of the nation about serious security lapses in safe-guarding the most sensitive religious place in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Militants have virtually taken over the mosque and are dictating their terms for a settlement with the Government". K.L. Sharma said adding "the Government in the state as well as at the Centre have been caught unaware and are now finding it difficult to deal with the situation."

## Appendix 66

### KASHMIR AND ARMY

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Chief of the Army Staff, Gen B.C. Joshi, today described the Hazratbal operation in Kashmir as more of a "psychological pressure" rather than an offensive, and said the army has no intention of using force to flush out the militants holed up in the shrine.

"We will not use force unless compelled to retaliate," he said on October 18, 1993 and added that the army had so far not fired a single shot even though there had been firing by the militants. However, he said time was on "our side".

"We took them by surprise. I believe, and that was a big advantage. We will wear them down," he said.

Calling the joint operation imaginative he said the imagination lies not in using force but attacking the mind. "We are not interested in killings," the Army Chief stressed while talking to reporters on his way back from a four-day visit to the Kumaon region in Uttar Pradesh.

Gen Joshi said the entire Hazratbal area had been cordoned off and water and electricity supply cut. No one could enter or leave the area. There was no question of any clandestine supplies from outside reaching the militants, he pointed out.

According to the army chief, three or four women who had come out from the shrine had been handed over to the local authorities.

"All the militants inside must surrender. Although we will not be dictated to, we will be reasonable with them if they surrender peacefully," he said. Those who surrender would be handed over to the state administration and the law of the land shall prevail he said.

The army chief disclosed that there are four such hideouts, besides the shrine, in the Kashmir Valley. Authorities are not short of troops for further operations. "We shall break the militants will to fight," he asserted.

Gen Joshi estimated that the militants in the Valley numbered around 10,000. They include hardcore militants, carriers and procurers of ammunition.

During the past two months the army had daily seized about 15 to 20 weapons and some 15 to 25 militants had either been killed or surrendered.

The troops had been told to use minimum force and respect human rights. "Our troops have been trained not to get angry even in the face of extreme provocation. They have been given strict instructions to respect human rights. I am extremely happy on the human rights issue. There have been no complaints in the past four months on this score," Gen Joshi said.

Gen Joshi said the local army commander had been given complete freedom of action in the drive against insurgency.

The army had also adopted some villages and the response of the local populace was quite encouraging.

It is a long haul and we are happy that the alienation among the local people is diminishing by the day. The army is respected and people are happy about the presence of the army," the army chief claimed.

## Appendix 67

### PAKISTAN STAND ON KASHMIR

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PAKISTAN'S ADVOCACY of the right of self-determination for Kashmiris is a "prescription for the destruction of not only the state of Kashmir but of the whole region," says an expert on Central Asian affairs.

In his paper presented at the two-day round-table conference on Kashmir, which began in Brussels on October 18, 1993 K.N. Pandita said the right of selfdetermination was applicable only if a nationality was oppressed politically, economically, ethnically or culturally by another nationality.

But there is no such suppression in Kashmir. Infact, the measure of political and civil rights enjoyed by Kashmiris in addition to the constitutional provisions like Article 370 had no parallel in any Muslim country," he said.

The demand for selfdetermination, as propagated by Pakistan by arousing religious passions among its own people and co-religionists in the neighbourhood, is an anti-thesis of progress and enlightenment, Pandita said.

## Appendix 68

### ISLAM AND TERRORISM

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New Delhi, on October 19, 1993 rejected the statement of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Hamid Algabid as onesided and without relevance to facts.

The Secretary General of the OIC had not only ignored the fact that it was the terrorists who were responsible for the escalation of tension, but had also made "unacceptable observations and gratuitous recommendations with regard to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry said in New Delhi.

"We deplore and reject these sweeping, simplistic and biased references," the spokesperson said. The responsibility for the acts of arson and intimidation of those frequenting the Hazratbal Mosque in Srinager rested with the terrorists who had desecrated the shrine and even threatened to blow it up.

The Government has evidence that these terrorists have been armed and aided by Pakistan, the spokesperson added.

## Appendix 69

### KASHMIR AND PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO

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**BENAZIR BHUTTO** on October 19, 1993 day became Pakistan's fifteenth Prime Minister defeating arch rival Nawaz Sharif. Her party scored a crucial victory in the vital Punjab Assembly by winning the elections of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker by a convincing margin.

At the swearing in ceremony inside a grand chandeliered hall of the Aiwan-e-Sadr (President's House), Acting President Wasim Sajjad administered the oath of office and secrecy to 40-year-old Ms Bhutto, who is the only Prime Minister in the Muslim world to return to power for the second time. Flash bulbs popped and television cameras rolled as Ms Bhutto, wearing a peacock-blue dress with a white scarf on head, read out the oath after the recitation of verses from the Quran.

In her maiden Press conference after election, the Oxford and Harvard educated Bhutto declared that she would seek a political solution to the Kashmir issue. "Kashmir was a burning issue in the region and my Government would try to reduce tension in the region," she told newsmen at a Pakistan Air Force Base in Islamabad before leaving for Peshawar.

Earlier in the day, out of the 201 members present in the 217-member National Assembly, 121 voted in favour of Bhutto while 72 favoured Nawaz Sharif. Eight members abstained from voting.

Prominent among those who did not cast their vote was former Prime Minister and National People's Party (NPP) Chief Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. Members of the Jamiat-ulema-i-Islam, led by Moulana Fazlulur, and the

Pakistan Islamic Front also abstained from voting. In her brief speech, Ms Bhutto, 40 pleaded for good Government - Opposition and Centre-provinces relations and promised that her Government would bring a law which would make horse-trading impossible.

Her first priority, she said would be to take Pakistan out of international isolation caused by charges of supporting terrorism, drug trade and of carrying on a clandestine nuclear programme.

The daughter of late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto conceded that the country was facing severe economic and social problems. "Pakistan is passing through a tough period. We are facing severe economic problems. The people want improvement and reforms," she said. She thanked the Army for conducting fair elections. Sharif who spoke after her, said his party would not oppose the Government just for the sake of opposition or indulge in conspiracies.